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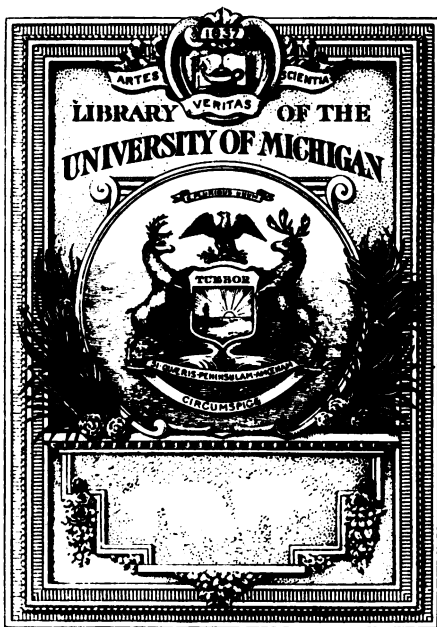
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COMUS.

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MILTON'S COMUS

EDITED

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WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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INTRODUCTION.

I. MASQUES.

As developed in England, the Masque combined declamation, dialogue, music, dancing, scenery, and elaborate ornamentation. (In this species of dramatic composition, therefore, the literary element was always in danger of being, and very often was, almost wholly obscured by the efforts of the musician, the dancing-master, the scene-painter, the costumier, and the architect.) When the poet's work was least conspicuous, the representation would border on the pageant; when, by breadth of action and the presence of well-marked characters, the poet's work was more conspicuous, the representation would approach the play. This union of artists is well illustrated by the famous alliance between Inigo Jones and Ben Jonson. While it lasted, the great architect and the great poet ruled the world of Masques. With the aid of subordinate workers, they contrived the gorgeous spectacles that delighted the first Stuarts, and for a time

eclipsed the regular drama. The opposition of interest natural to such a union is equally well exemplified by the quarrel and separation between the partners. The enumeration of the elements making up a Masque will at once suggest how costly such performances must have been. In the palmy days under James I. and Charles I., each Masque seems to have cost about £1400; in 1634, indeed, one resplendent affair cost the Inns of Court about £20,000. In consequence of such expense, the presentation of Masques was possible only for very wealthy people. As Mr. J. A. Symonds points out, such persons also monopolised the magnificence of the Masque, the processions and the dances—the Masque proper—and handed over the dramatic part proper, the dialogue and the action—the Antimasque—to professional actors. The first Stuarts spent large sums on this amusement; Elizabeth had preferred being amused at the expense of rich subjects, like Leicester.

The Masque probably came to England from Italy. If to the Italian Ballets, with their rudimentary acting, music, and dancing, and the Italian Triumphs, with their wealth of magnificent surroundings, and effective stage machinery, is added the literary element, we have the English Masque. Its peculiarity is that it secured the services of writers like

Jonson, Fletcher, Chapman, Dekker, Ford, and Milton, who were willing to wed their poetry to 'painting and carpentry'. When exactly the Masque reached England cannot be determined. In 1513 something of the kind seems to have been performed at Court by Henry VIII. and his courtiers; thereafter, the Masque existed on the cold patronage of the Tudors, till it was quickened into vigorous life by the Stuarts. With all other amusements, it decayed under the Commonwealth; unlike some, it got no new lease of life, unless, indeed, we regard the lower kind of Masque as represented by the pantomime, the higher, by the opera. The first Masque put on the English stage was T. Nabbes' 'Microcosmus' (printed in 1637); it is called 'A Morall Masque,' and was indeed very like a Morality. It contains some lines so much in the vein of the Spirit's Epilogue in 'Comus' that I am tempted to quote them :

'Welcome, welcome, happy pair,
 To these abodes where spicy air
 Breathes perfume, and every sense
 Doth find his object's excellence;
 Where's no heat, nor cold extreme,
 No winter's ice, no summer's scorching beam;
 Where's no sun, yet never night,
 Day always springing from eternal light.
 All mortal sufferings laid aside,
 Here in endless bliss abide.'

Masques were sometimes brought on the stage as part of the regular drama; note, for example, the Masque in 'The Tempest'.

'Comus' is a specimen of the high literary Masque. Divorced from scenic presentment, it remains to all time a great poetic allegory. Remembrance of its genesis is essential chiefly to the critic that would judge it purely as a drama.

II. COMUS: HISTORY OF THE POEM.

'Critics have pointed out that, in writing "Comus," Milton must have had before him analogous compositions by some previous writers, more especially the "Old Wives' Tale" of the dramatist Peele (1595); Fletcher's pastoral of "The Faithful Shepherdess," which had been revived as a royal play for Twelfth-night, and also at the theatres in 1633-4; Ben Jonson's Masque of "Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue" (1619), in which Masque Comus is one of the characters; and, most especially of all, a Latin poem entitled "Comus" by Erycius Puteanus (Henri du Pay, Professor of Eloquence at Louvain), 1608, and republished at Oxford in 1634. Coincidences as regards the plan, the characters, and the imagery are undoubtedly discernible between "Comus" and these compositions. Infinitely too much, however, has been made of such coincidences.

After all of them, even the most ideal and poetical, the feeling in reading "Comus" is that all here is different, all peculiar. The peculiarity consists no less in the power and purity of the doctrine, than in the exquisite literary finish; and, doctrine and poetry together, this one composition ought to have been sufficient, to use the words of Mr. Hallam, "to convince any one of taste and feeling that a great poet had arisen in England, and one partly formed in a different school from his contemporaries".—Professor Masson, quoted by Mr. Browne. On Michaelmas night, 1634, at Ludlow Castle, Ludlow, Shropshire, the headquarters of the 'Lord President of the Council in the Principality of Wales and the Marches of the same,' 'Comus' was presented before the then Lord President, John, Earl of Bridgewater, Viscount Brackley. This nobleman had been appointed to his high office in 1631, but he did not enter upon his duties till later. When he did take up his residence at Ludlow Castle, he was received with great pomp and circumstance; and a Masque formed part of the ceremonial. Henry Lawes, the most celebrated composer of his day, was asked to supply the music, and to take general supervision of the entertainment. Milton's musical tastes had probably led to his knowing the great composer, who asked his

young friend to furnish the poetry. These two had already been fellow-workers; Lawes had had charge of a Masque presented at Harefield before the Dowager-Countess of Derby, step-mother of our Earl of Bridgewater, and mother of his wife, and for this entertainment Milton wrote 'Arcades'. In 1637, Lawes, who had been obliged to concede to importunity many MS. copies of 'Comus,' got the poem printed; this edition bears a motto, probably supplied by Milton, and is dedicated to the Earl of Bridgewater's eldest son, Viscount Brackley. The old diplomatist, Sir Henry Wootton, had read the poem before he knew who the author was, and had got from it 'singular delight'. On receiving from Milton a copy of Lawes' edition, Sir Henry wrote to the author to say he had already enjoyed the work, and that 'I should much commend the tragical part [the dialogue], if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language'. This high praise was, as it might well be, very gratifying to Milton.

The leading parts in 'Comus' were thus distributed: The Lady, Lady Alice Egerton, youngest daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater; First Brother, Viscount Brackley; Second

Brother, Mr. Thomas Egerton ; *The Attendant Spirit*, Lawes. The names of those that played Comus and Sabrina have not been preserved.

III. WORDS—GRAMMAR—NUMBER AND ORDER OF WORDS.

'Comus' contains a considerable number of words noticeable either for their form, such as *sovrán* ; for their unfamiliarity, such as *bosky* ; for their peculiarity of meaning, such as *perplexed* ; for their quantity, such as *conscience*, a trisyllable ; or for their accent, such as *complete*. Most of these words are commented on in the notes.

In the notes attention is drawn also to a variety of grammatical points ; here it may be advisable to classify the leading peculiarities, and to remark on some special usages. To follow first, then, the order of the parts of speech :

1. Noun.—(a) Number : 'Shoon' (l. 635) occurs as the plural of 'shoe'. (b) Case : The 's is omitted in 'thicket side' (l. 185).

2. Pronoun.—(a) 'Ye' (as in l. 216) is used as the object of a verb. (b) 'His' (l. 248) is used for 'its'. (c) Milton's use of 'who', 'which', 'that'. On this point Professor Masson has a long and valuable section. In it he says : 'The only attempt that I know of to establish a logical principle on the subject is

in Professor Bain's English Grammar. His principle is that *who* and *which* ought to be reserved for co-ordinate clauses in a sentence—i.e. for clauses of additional predication—while *that* ought to be used in all clauses merely restrictive or explanatory of a current subject or predicate.' This is a correct statement of Dr. Bain's *general rule*, but Prof. Masson has overlooked certain important qualifications. One of these, namely, 'the restrictive relative does not apply well when a noun is already qualified even by an adjective' (*A Companion to the Higher English Grammar*, p. 75), would have prevented Prof. Masson from declaring certain expressions in 'Comus' contraventions of the rule. This will be clear from an examination of a few cases from 'Comus'.

(1.) Milton uses 'that' correctly :

'Yet some there be *that* by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of Eternity' (ll. 12-14).

(2.) He uses 'who' and 'which' correctly:

'Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
Lead in swift round the months and years'
(ll. 112-114).

'Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call Earth' (ll. 5, 6).

(3.) He uses 'that' incorrectly :

'And disinherit Chaos, *that* reigns here
In double night of darkness and of shades'
(ll. 884, 885).

The restrictive relative should not be used when the subject is already defined ; see also ll. 46-50, ll. 111, 112, and ll. 130-133.

(4.) In several passages he uses 'who' and 'which' incorrectly, but Prof. Masson is not able to quote any perfect example from 'Comus'. These are his citations :

'I shall appear some harmless villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear'
(ll. 166, 167).

'Some other means I have *which* may be used,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt' (ll. 821, 822).

'Yea, even that *which* Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory'
(ll. 591, 592).

In the first two examples, 'some harmless' and 'some other' seem sufficiently defining to dispense with additional limitation ; in the third, 'that that' would be harsh ; see also ll. 675-677.

3. Adjective.—(a) 'Mickle' (l. 31) is used for 'much'. (b) 'Old' (l. 822) follows its noun.

4. Verb.—(a) 'Be' (l. 12) is used for 'are'. (b) There are several noticeable inflections : for example, 'stole,' for 'stolen,' ; 'took,' for

'taken'; 'sprung,' for 'sprang'; 'awe-strook,' for 'awe-struck'. (c) Noun for verb: 'lackey' (l. 455), 'storied' (l. 516).

5. Syntax.—(a) 'Dwell'st' (l. 268) is a wrong concord. (b) Note the Latinism in l. 48 (see note). (c) There are several examples of change of construction: see ll. 5-8, ll. 195-200, ll. 223-225, ll. 470-475, ll. 934-937, with relative notes.

6. Ellipsis.—There are several examples: see l. 267, l. 355.

7. Redundancies.—See ll. 188, 543.

The mention of 'redundancies' leads naturally to the consideration of number of words. Milton's style is characterised by a brevity that asserts itself more and more in successive poems, till it culminates in 'Samson Agonistes'. Even a careless reader of 'Comus' would, I think, come to the conclusion that the language is in general concise, and before reaching the end of the poem might possibly discover some of the devices securing this brevity. To illustrate Milton's sparing use of words I shall compare one couplet from 'Comus' with a passage from Collins' 'Ode to Evening'. Since 'Comus' was acted when Milton was in his twenty-sixth year, and Campbell says of Collins that his 'works will abide comparison with whatever Milton wrote under the age of thirty,' the comparison of

the two passages, treating of the same subjects, seems appropriate.

To describe the approach of evening, Milton says :

‘The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of Heaven doth hold’ (ll. 98, 94).

Of this same star Collins writes :

‘For when thy folding star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant hours and elves
Who slept in buds the day,
And many a nymph who wreathes her brows with
sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and lovelier still
The pensive pleasures sweet
Prepare thy shadowy car.’

In the main thought Collins is more concise than Milton : ‘folding’ is equivalent to ‘that bids the shepherd fold,’ and ‘shows his paly circlet,’ to ‘now the top of Heaven doth hold’; on the other hand, Milton has nothing answering to the rest of Collins’ lines. Compare with them the magnificent figure in ll. 188-190 :

‘The gray-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer’s weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus’ wain’,

where Milton’s associations are more briefly expressed, and are grander. Lines 95-97—

‘And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream’—

may also be compared with Collins’

‘While now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O’erhang his wavy bed’.

While, however, there is a general conciseness in Milton, which only comparison with other verse will bring out fully, ‘Comus’ illustrates certain grammatical and rhetorical ways of securing brevity.

(1.) The abstract noun is used for a phrase or clause.

‘Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father’s *state*’ (ll. 84, 85).

Here is an abbreviation for—‘To attend their father in his position of state’.

‘The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger’
(ll. 88, 89).

For—‘The nodding of whose shady brows
fills with horror and threats,’ &c.

‘Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence?’
(l. 697).

For—‘Hast thou betrayed me, taking advantage of the credulousness that is the con-

sequence of my innocence'. Other examples occur in ll. 40, 55, 107-110, 949-950.

(2.) The adjective phrase is used for the adjective clause.

A good example is seen in l. 66—'To quench the drouth of Phœbus'; for—'To quench the drouth that has been caused by Phœbus'.

(3.) The co-ordinating adjective is substituted for a clause.

'Sin-worn' (l. 17), is for—'which is sin-worn'; so 'sea-girt' (l. 21), 'vowed' (l. 136), 'tell-tale' (l. 141), 'unacquainted' (l. 180), 'forestalling' (l. 285), 'printless' (l. 897). 'Prosperous' (l. 270) is for—'which is prosperous under thy influence'. A restrictive clause is reduced to one word in l. 36, 'new-intrusted'; l. 685, 'unexempt'; l. 841, 'immortal'. 'Immortal' is for—'that made her immortal'.

(4.) A participial phrase is used for a clause.

'Nursed in princely lore' (l. 84) is for—'who have been nursed in princely lore'. So 'dropping' (l. 106) and 'baited' (l. 162).

(5.) Brevity is got by compounding words. Examples: 'sin-worn' (l. 17), 'sea-girt' (l. 21), 'near-ushering' (l. 279), 'night-foundered' (l. 483).

(6.) The condensed sentence occurs:

'Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-intrusted sceptre' (ll. 85, 86).

(7.) Certain figures of speech assist brevity.

'Suspicious flight' (l. 158) is for—flight due to suspicion of evil'; 'star of Acady' (l. 341) is a condensed way of referring to the sort of guidance that was necessary. Other examples are 'lime-twigs' (l. 646), 'visored falsehood' (l. 698), 'bolt' (l. 760).

(8.) Ellipsis has already been referred to. For a striking example, see ll. 88-91.

The order of words in 'Comus' is remarkably natural:

'But, ere a close,

The wonted roar was up amid the woods,
And filled the air with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceased, and listened them awhile,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respite to the drowsy frightened steeds
That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displaced. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death' (ll. 548-562).

This is one of the very finest passages in the poem; and yet its order is the order of prose, and this is the characteristic order of words in 'Comus'. The chief variations are illustrated in the following extract:—

' We, that are of purer fire,
 Imitate the starry quire,
 Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
 Lead in swift round the months and years.
 The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
 Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
 And on the tawny sands and shelves
 Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
 By dimpled brook and fountain brim,
 The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim,
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep :
 What hath night to do with sleep ? ' (ll. 111-122).

In this passage there are several inversions, but the language of ' Comus ' does not countenance the notion that unusual order of words is a convention of verse. On the other hand, ' it would appear that Mr. Morris consciously uses the inverted sentence as one of the regular poetic forms, and often prefers it when the direct order would have been most suitable '.—Bain.

IV. FIGURES OF SPEECH.

1. The whole poem is an allegory : Comus, with his crew of licentious revellers, represents (1) the vice of the Court ; (2) the Romanising tendencies of Laud ; while the Lady, the Spirit, and the Brothers, stand for that virtue which 'alone is free'. In Milton's time, the conventional refinements of the Court were

but 'glozing courtesy,' assumed by the given over to sensuality, and glorying in their shame.

'And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.'

In their hands entertainments such as Masques were mere instruments of vice, while their literature, like the speeches of Comus, was a mere special pleading for iniquity. It is in protest against such moral degradation that Milton expounds his great defence of 'divine philosophy, not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose, but musical as is Apollo's lute, and a perpetual feast of nectared sweets, where no crude surfeit reigns'. In Milton's time, again, the Church was being dragooned into Ritualism by Laud. In section four, chapter eight, of his *Short History*, Mr. Green gives a vivid account of Laud's manner of driving Puritanism from the Church to America. 'Backed as Laud was by the power of the Crown, the struggle became more hopeless every day. The Puritan saw his ministers silenced or deprived, his Sabbath profaned [e.g. by 'wakes'], the most sacred act of his worship brought near, as he fancied, to the

Roman mass. Roman doctrine met him from the pulpit, Roman practices met him in the Church.' And so the Church, beaten down, sat, like the Lady, 'in stony fetters fixed and motionless'. Nor is the triumph of the Brothers (Puritans and Presbyterians?) over the false shepherd complete. They fail to seize the enchanter, and have to call in the aid of the nymph Sabrina. Milton has his doubts of the complete success of the expedient, the sorcerer may 'entice with some other new device,' but these fall from him as the Spirit closes the poem with an exultant eulogium of Virtue.

2. While the style of 'Comus' is not so laden with figures as to be termed ornate, a large part of the charm of the poem is due to the subtle way in which the language is interwoven with figurative expression. Exclamation and Interrogation both occur, but the examples do not call for special comment. The Transferred Epithet is illustrated in 'chaste footing' (l. 146) and 'suspicious flight' (l. 158). The kind of Epigram called Oxymoron is exemplified in 'sweet poison' (l. 47), 'sweet madness' (l. 261), 'pleasing poison' (l. 526). 'Spot' (l. 5), 'age' (l. 40), 'youth' (l. 55), 'feet' (l. 180), are Synecdoches. A very fine example of Apostrophe passing into Vision is seen in lines 213-216:

‘O welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed
 Hope,
 Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
 And thou unblemished form of Chastity!
 I see ye visibly!’

A strong Contrast is afforded between the vicious Comus and his crew and the lofty purity of the Spirit, the Lady, and the Brothers. There are two Hyperboles that call for special attention. The first—

‘And sweetened every muskrose of the dale’
 (l. 496)—

is remarkable for the softness of the language : the second—

‘I was all ear,
 And took in strains that might create a soul
 Under the ribs of Death’ (ll. 560-562)—

for the degree of elevation excited by the grandeur of the conception. Both turn on the pleasure of music, which with Milton was a high pleasure ; ‘his only recreation, besides conversation, was music’. As Dr. Bain points out, in speaking of the second figure, the emotion appealed to is not strong enough in many to respond to such intensity of expression ; the force of the figures depends in the second case on originality and grandeur, in the first on musical expression. The remaining figures are figures of comparison, and most numerous among these are Personifications.

Among these again most of the examples are ~~personifications of abstract qualities~~. These do not become such vivid flesh and blood as in Spenser, but touches of humanity relieve their cold and shadowy nature. See, for example, ll. 385-403. Of a different kind is the fine figure in ll. 188-190, already quoted : see Section III. As might be inferred from what has been said of Milton's brevity, Metaphors are more numerous than Similes. For metaphors, see ll. 7, 13, 34, 100, 131, 147, 154, 181, 341, 520, 532, 646, 716, 760, 809; of these 'spongy air' may be noted as highly expressive. Similes occur in ll. 22, 80, 303, 478, 534, 556, 743. Of these, 'swift as the sparkle of a glancing star' is at once picturesque and expressive, while a hush of expectation is induced by the grand simile :

'At last a soft and solemn breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
And stole upon the air'.

V. THE VERSE.

(A) The dialogue is in blank verse (Milton's first use of this measure); that is, in lines whose type is a line of ten syllables, with every second syllable accented. For example :

'Fair maidenhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a Virgin, such as was herself'.

Lines 495-512, it is to be noted, consist of such lines in rhyming pairs—heroic couplets.

I calculate that about thirty per cent. of the lines are deviations from the type. These deviations may be thus classified:

(a) The line has five accents and ten syllables, but the accent does not fall uniformly on the second syllable.

- 'In régions mīld of cálm and seréne air.'
- 'To láy their júst hánds on that gólden káy.'
- 'Of évery sált flód and each ébbing stréam.'
- 'Bút to my tásk. Néptune, besides the swáy.'
- 'Crúshed the swéet póison of misúsed wíne.'
- 'Wínd me ínto the eásy-héarted mán.'
- 'Stépped, as they sáid, to the néxt thicket síde.'
- 'As the kínd hósptáble wóods provide.'
- 'They léft me thén when the gráy-hóoded Éven.'
- 'To mý propórioned stréngth. Shépherd, lead ón.'
- 'Stóop, thy pále vísage through an ámber clóud.'
- 'Or if your ínfluence be quáte dámmed úp.'
- 'To a wéll góverned and wíse áppetíte.'
- 'They had their náme thénce: cóarse compléxions.'
- 'Who píteous of her wóes, réared her lánk héad.'

(b) The line has five accents, but has more than ten syllables, the last being accented.

- 'At lást betákes him tó this óminous wóod.'
- 'To quénch the dróuth of Phóebus; which as they táste.'
- 'Likeliest, and néarest tó the présent áid.'

'To séek i' the vâlley sôme cool friéndly spring.
'And pláy i' the plighted clóuds. I was áwe-
stróok.'

'Not béing in dânger, ás I trúst she is nó't.'

'May sít i' the céntre and enjóy bríght dáy.'

'But fór that dâmned magícian, lét him be gírt.'

'Crâms, and blasphêmes his Feéder. Sháll I go
ón?'

(c) The line has five accents, but more than ten syllables, the last being unaccented.

'Stríve to keep úp a fráil and féverish béing.'

'And hére their ténder áge might súffer péril.'

'Cóasting the Týrrhene shóre, as the winds lísted.'

'And the swéet péace that goódnness bósoms éver.'

'Of óur unówned síster. I dó not, bróther.'

'The dívine próperty óf her first béing.'

'And yét more méd'cinal ís it than thát móly.'

(d) The line has five accents, but more than ten syllables, the last two being unaccented.

'Ás to make this relátion? Cáre and útmost
shifts.'

'As íf she wóuld her chíldren shóuld be ríotous.'

'Is nów the lábour óf my thóughts. 'Tis líkeliest.'

If these lines are read with six accents, they become Alexandrines, and possibly the first two should be so scanned.

(e) The line has six accents.

'I múst not súffer thís; yét 'tis bút the leés.'

'That Hé, the Supréme Goód, to whóm áll things
íll.'

'But hé that h́des a dárk sóul and foúl thóughts.'
 'Féared her stérn frówn, and shé was quéén o'
 the woóds.'

(B) Lines 93-144, 867-889, 976-1023, are recitative in lines of eight syllables with every second syllable accented, and rhyming in pairs.

'By dímples bróok and fóuntain brím,
 The woód-nýmphs, décked with dáisies trím,
 Their mérry wákes and pástimes kéep.'

I subjoin lines illustrating the chief variations.

'Nów the tóp of Heáven doth hóld.'
 'Ánd the slope Sún his úpward béam.'
 'The sóunds and séas, with áll their fínny dróve,
 'Nów to the móon in wávering mórrice móve'
 'Trip the pert fáiries and the dápper élves.'
 'The níce Mórn on the Índian stéep.'
 'Góddess déar.'
 'Úp in the bróad fields of the ský.'

(C) Songs.

(a) The Lady's song, lines 230-243.

Illustrative lines :

'Sweet Écho, swéetest nýmph, that lív'st unséen
 'Withín thy áiry shéll
 By slów Meándér's márgent gréen.'
 'Whére the lóve-lorn níghtingále.'
 'Níghtly to thée her sád song móurneth wéll.'
 'Téll me but whére.'
 'And gíve resóunding gráce to áll Heaven's
 hármoniés.'

The rhymes are 1, 3 + 2, 6 + 4, 5 + 7, 8 + 9, 10 + 11, 12 + 13, 14.

(b) Spirit's song, lines 859-866.

Additional illustrations of the song measures :

'Listen where thóu art sitting.'

'The lóose tráin of thy ámbur-drópping háir.'

'Listen and sáve.'

Rhymes : 1, 5 + 2, 4 + 3, 8 + 6, 7.

(c) Sabrina's song, lines 890-901.

Rhymes : 1, 2 + 3, 6 + 4, 5 + 7, 8 + 9, 10. Lines 11, 12 rhyme with lines that follow, and link the song very prettily to the Spirit's reply.

(d) Spirit's songs, lines 958-965, 966-975. These are in rhyming couplets. The measure has been already illustrated.

(D) Rhyme. (a) There is an occasional alliteration :

Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star'.

(b) Examples of imperfect rhymes: revelry, jollity; severity, lie; drove, move; prove, love; pair, are; have, cave; where, sphere; skies, harmonies; madrigal, dale; she, company; wave, have; resort, sport; shew, dew; were, her. In most cases, the vowel sounds are not alike; in one or two an accented vowel is made to rhyme with an unaccented; in the first, neither vowel is accented.

(E) The Caesura. To what extent Milton tried to produce the pleasure due to 'the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another,' may be seen in the following passage :

'Before the starry threshold | of Jove's court
My mansion is | where those immortal shapes
Of bright aërial spirits | live inspired
In regions mild | of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir | of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, | and, with low-thoughted
care,
Strive to keep up | a frail and feverish being,
Unmindful of the crown | that Virtue gives,
After this mortal change, | to her true servants,
Amongst the enthroned gods | on sainted seats.'

These show the most usual breaks in Milton's lines.

VI. QUALITIES OF THE POEM.

Almost enough has been said to indicate the leading characteristics of 'Comus'. The high morality of the allegory gives the poem a certain stately sublimity; one cannot but respond to the high-toned teaching that falls from the lips of the Lady, and is echoed in the closing words of the Spirit :

'Love Virtue; she alone is free'.

The impression is aided by the brevity of the language, the chasteness of the figurative

adornment, and the compactness of the verse. Now and then the reader is thrilled by a touch more stirring than the cold grandeur of perfect purity, as when

‘The gray-hooded Even,
Like a sad votarist in palmer’s weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus’ wain’.

A softer pleasure is yielded by the beauty of such passages as Comus’ speech, ‘I know each lane, and every alley green,’ by the music of such a line as ‘And sweetened every muskrose of the dale,’ and by the pathetic ring of Comus’ words, ‘from these gates Sorrow flies far’. There is, moreover, a certain exhilarating effect caused by the light movement of much of Comus’ words, bringing as they do, what Milton possibly intended, an echo of the jig-like lines of L’Allegro :

‘Come, and trip it as ye go
On the light fantastic toe’.

After a grudging admission of the ‘truly poetical’ character of ‘Comus’ as a series of lines, Johnson censures it as a drama. He finds fault with the conduct of the Brothers in so carelessly leaving their sister, with the Spirit’s addressing the audience, with the length of his speech, with the general terms of Comus’ invitations to pleasure, with the ‘elegant, but tedious soliloquies of Comus

and the Lady,' with the conversation indulged in by the Brothers, when they should be looking for their sister, with the time they waste with the Spirit, with the story told by the Spirit, with the dialogue for being too bold in figures and too luxuriant in language, with the songs as unmusical, and harsh in diction, and with the whole thing as 'a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid and tediously instructive'. To all this it seems sufficient to reply that 'Comus' was not put forward as a drama proper. Its end was to detain a number of amateur actors amid magnificent surroundings and to give them an opportunity of displaying themselves, their fine dresses, their dancing, and their musical powers. All of which, no doubt, it did, and Johnson's strictures on the form, therefore, are irrelevant. His remarks on the style may be, and in preceding sections have been by implication, challenged, while as to the objections to the teaching, one can only say to the sturdy old Doctor, 'If you find it tediously instructive, then it is tediously instructive—for you'.

COMUS.

COMUS.

PERSONS.

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *afterwards*
in the habit of THYRSIS.

COMUS, *with his crew.*

THE LADY.

FIRST BROTHER.

SECOND BROTHER.

SABRINA, *the Nymph.*

The chief persons that presented were :

THE LORD BRACKLEY ;

MR. THOMAS EGERTON, *his brother ;*

THE LADY ALICE EGERTON.

THE FIRST SCENE DISCOVERS A WILD WOOD.

THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright ærial spirits live insphered
In regions mild of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot 5
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confined and pestered in this pifold here,

Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
 Unmindful of the crown that Virtue gives,
 After this mortal change, to her true servants 10
 Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.
 Yet some there be that by due steps aspire
 To lay their just hands on that golden key
 That opes the palace of Eternity.

To such my errand is ; and, but for such, 15
 I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
 With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
 Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
 Took in by lot, 'twixt high and nether Jove, 20
 Imperial rule of all the sea-girt isles
 That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
 The unadorned bosom of the deep ;

Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
 By course commits to several government, 25
 And gives them leave to wear their sapphire crowns,
 And wield their little tridents. But this isle,

The greatest and the best of all the main,
 He quarters to his blue-haired deities ;
 And all this tract that fronts the falling sun, 30
 A noble peer of mickle trust and power

Has in his charge, with tempered awe to guide
 An old and haughty nation, proud in arms :
 Where his fair offspring, nursed in princely lore, 35
 Are coming to attend their father's state,

And new-intrusted sceptre. But their way
 Lies through the perplexed paths of this drear wood,
 The nodding horror of whose shady brows
 Threats the forlorn and wandering passenger ;
 And here their tender age might suffer peril, 40

But that, by quick command from sovran Jove,
 I was despatched for their defence and guard :
 And listen why ; for I will tell you now
 What never yet was heard in tale or song,
 From old or modern bard, in hall or bower. 45

Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
 Crushed the sweet poison of misused wine,
 After the Tuscan mariners transformed,
 Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
 On C  rce's island fell. (Who knows not Circe, 50
 The daughter of the Sun, whose charmed cup
 Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
 And downward fell into a grovelling swine ?)
 This Nymph, that gazed upon his clustering locks,
 With ivy berries wreathed, and his blithe youth, 55
 Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
 Much like his father, but his mother more,
 Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus named :
 Who, ripe and frolic of his full grown age,
 Roving the Celtic and Iberian fields, 60
 At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
 And, in thick shelter of black shades imbowered,
 Excels his mother at her mighty art ;
 Offering to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass, 65
 To quench the drouth of Ph  bus ; which as they taste
 (For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
 Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
 The express resemblance of the gods, is changed
 Into some brutish form of wolf or bear, 70
 Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
 All other parts remaining as they were.
 And they, so perfect is their misery,

Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
 But boast themselves more comely than before ; 75
 And all their friends and native home forget,
 To roll with pleasure in a sensual sty.
 Therefore, when any favoured of high Jove
 Chances to pass through this adventurous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star 80
 I shoot from heaven, to give him safe convoy,
 As now I do. But first I must put off
 These my sky-robes, spun out of Iris' woof,
 And take the weeds and likeness of a swain
 That to the service of this house belongs, 85
 Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
 Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
 And hush the waving woods ; nor of less faith,
 And in this office of his mountain watch
 Likeliest, and nearest to the present aid 90
 Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
 Of hateful steps ; I must be viewless now.

COMUS enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his
 glass in the other ; with him a rout of monsters,
 headed like sundry sorts of wild beasts, but otherwise
 like men and women, their apparel glistening. They
 come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with
 torches in their hands.

COMUS.

The star that bids the shepherd fold
 Now the top of Heaven doth hold ;
And the gilded car of day 95
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream ;
 And the slope Sun his upward beam
 Shoots against the dusky pole,
 Pacing toward the other goal 100

Of his chamber in the east.
 Meanwhile, welcome joy and feast,
 Midnight shout and revelry,
 Tipsy dance and jollity.
 Braid your locks with rosy twine, 105
 Dropping odours, dropping wine.
 Rigour now is gone to bed ;
 And Advice with scrupulous head,
 Strict Age, and sour Severity,
 With their grave saws, in slumber lie. 110
 We, that are of purer fire,
 Imitate the starry quire,
 Who, in their nightly watchful spheres,
 Lead in swift round the months and years.
 The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove, 115
 Now to the moon in wavering morrice move ;
 And on the tawny sands and shelves
 Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
 By dimpled brook and fountain brim,
 The wood-nymphs, decked with daisies trim, 120
 Their merry wakes and pastimes keep :
 What hath night to do with sleep ?
 Night hath better sweets to prove ;
 Venus now wakes, and wakens Love.
 Come, let us our rites begin ; 125
 'Tis only daylight that makes sin,
 Which these dun shades will ne'er report.
 Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
 Dark-veiled Cotytto, to whom the secret flame
 Of midnight torches burns ! mysterious dame, 130
 That ne'er art called but when the dragon womb
 Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
 And makes one blot of all the air !

Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
 Wherein thou ridest with Hecat', and befriend 135
 Us thy vowed priests, till utmost end
 Of all thy dues be done, and none left out ;
 Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
 The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
 From her cabined loophole peep, 140
 And to the tell-tale Sun descry
 Our concealed solemnity.
 Come, knit hands, and beat the ground
 In a light fantastic round.

The Measure.

Break off, break off ! I feel the different pace 145
 Of some chaste footing near about this ground.
 Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees ;
 Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
 (For so I can distinguish by mine art)
 Benighted in these woods ! Now to my charms, 150
 And to my wily trains : I shall erelong
 Be well stocked with as fair a herd as grazed
 About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
 My dazzling spells into the spongy air,
 Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion, 155
 And give it false presentments, lest the place
 And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
 And put the damsel to suspicious flight ;
 Which must not be, for that's against my course.
 I, under fair pretence of friendly ends, 160
 And well-placed words of glozing courtesy,
 Baited with reasons not unplausible,
 Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
 And hug him into snares. When once her eye
 Hath met the virtue of this magic dust, 165

I shall appear some harmless villager,
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
 But here she comes ; I fairly step aside,
 And hearken, if I may, her business here.

The LADY enters.

LADY.

This way the noise was, if mine ear be true, 170
 My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
 Of riot and ill-managed merriment,
 Such as the jocund flute or gamesome pipe
 Stirs up among the loose unlettered hinds ;
 When, for their teeming flocks and granges full, 175
 In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
 And thank the gods amiss. I should be loth
 To meet the rudeness and swilled insolence
 Of such late wassailers ; yet, oh ! where else
 Shall I inform my unacquainted feet 180
 In the blind mazes of this tangled wood ?
 My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
 With this long way, resolving here to lodge
 Under the spreading favour of these pines,
 Stepped, as they said, to the next thicket side, 185
 To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
 As the kind hospitable woods provide.
 They left me then when the gray-hooded Even,
 Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
 Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain. 190
 But where they are, and why they came not back,
 Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
 They had engaged their wandering steps too far ;
 And envious Darkness, ere they could return,
 Had stole them from me. Else, O thievish Night, 195
 Why shouldst thou, but for some felonious end,

In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars,
 That Nature hung in heaven, and filled their lamps
 With everlasting oil, to give due light
 To the misled and lonely traveller ? 200

This is the place, as well as I may guess,
 Whence even now the tumult of loud mirth
 Was rife, and perfect in my listening ear ;
 Yet nought but single darkness do I find.
 What might this be ? A thousand fantasies 205

Begin to throng into my memory,
 Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
 And airy tongues that syllable men's names
 On sands and shores and desert wildernesses.
 These thoughts may startle well, but not astound, 210
 The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
 By a strong siding champion, Conscience.

| O welcome pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
 Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
 And thou unblemished form of Chastity ! 215

I see ye visibly, and now believe
 That He, the Supreme Good, to whom all things ill.
 Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
 Would send a glistering guardian, if need were,
 To keep my life and honour unassailed. 220

Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night ?
 I did not err : there does a sable cloud
 Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
 And casts a gleam over this tufted grove. 225

I cannot halloo to my brothers, but
 Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
 I'll venture ; for my new enlivened spirits
 Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song.

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen 230
 Within thy airy shell
 By slow Meander's margent green,
 And in the violet-embroidered vale
 Where the love-lorn nightingale
 Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well : 235
 Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
 That liketh thy Narcissus are ?
 O, if thou have
 Hid them in some flowery cave,
 Tell me but where, 240
 Sweet queen of parly, daughter of the sphere !
 So may'st thou be translated to the skies,
 And give resounding grace to all Heaven's harmonies !

COMUS.

Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
 Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment ? 245
 Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
 And with these raptures moves the vocal air
 To testify his hidden residence.
 How sweetly did they float upon the wings
 Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night, 250
 At every fall smoothing the raven down
 Of Darkness till it smiled ! I have oft heard
 My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
 Amidst the flowery-kirtled Naiades,
 Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs, 255
 Who, as they sung, would take the prisoned soul
 And lap it in Elysium : Scylla wept,
 And chid her barking waves into attention,
 And fell Charybdis murmured soft applause.
 Yet they in pleasing slumber lulled the sense, 260

And in sweet madness robbed it of itself ;
 But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
 Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
 I never heard till now. I'll speak to her, . . .
 And she shall be my queen. Hail, foreign wonder ! 265
 Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
 Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
 Dwell'st here with Pan or Sylvan, by blest song
 Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
 To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood. 270

LADY.

Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
 That is addressed to unattending ears.
 Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
 How to regain my severed company,
 Compelled me to awake the courteous Echo 275
 To give me answer from her mossy couch.

COMUS.

What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus ?

LADY.

Dim darkness and this leafy labyrinth.

COMUS.

Could that divide you from near-ushering guides ?

LADY.

They left me weary on a grassy turf. 280

COMUS.

By falsehood or discourtesy or why ?

LADY.

To seek i' the valley some cool friendly spring.

COMUS.

And left your fair side all unguarded, lady ?

LADY.

They were but twain, and purposed quick return.

COMUS.

Perhaps forestalling night prevented them. 285

LADY.

How easy my misfortune is to hit !

COMUS.

Imports their loss, beside the present need ?

LADY.

No less than if I should my brothers lose.

COMUS.

Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom ?

LADY.

As smooth as Hebe's their unrazored lips. 290

COMUS.

Two such I saw, what time the laboured ox
 In his loose traces from the furrow came,
 And the swinked hedger at his supper sat ;
 I saw them under a green mantling vine
 That crawls along the side of yon small hill, 295
 Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots ;
 Their port was more than human, as they stood.
 I took it for a faëry vision
 Of some gay creatures of the element,
 That in the colours of the rainbow live, 300
 And play i' the plighted clouds. I was awe-strook,
 And, as I past, I worshipped. If those you seek,
 It were a journey like the path to Heaven,
 To help you find them.

LADY.

Gentle villager,
 What readiest way would bring me to that place ? 305

COMUS.

Due west it rises from this shrubby point.

LADY.

To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
 In such a scant allowance of star-light,
 Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
 Without the sure guess of well-practised feet. 310

COMUS.

I know each lane, and every alley green,
 Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wild wood, —
 And every bosky bourn from side to side,
 My daily walks and ancient neighbourhood ;
 And if your stray attendance be yet lodged, 315
 Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
 Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
 From her thatched pallet rouse. If otherwise,
 I can conduct you, lady, to a low
 But loyal cottage, where you may be safe 320
 Till further quest.

LADY.

Shepherd, I take thy word,—
 And trust thy honest offered courtesy,
 Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds
 With smoky rafters, than in tapestry halls
 In courts of princes, where it first was named, 325
 And yet is most pretended. In a place
 Less warranted than this, or less secure,
 I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
 Eye me, blest Providence, and square my trial
 To my proportioned strength ! Shepherd, lead on. 330
 [Exeunt.]

The two BROTHERS.

ELDER BROTHER.

Unmuffle, ye faint stars ; and thou, fair moon,
 That wont'st to love the traveller's benison,

Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
 And disinherit Chaos, that reigns here
 In double night of darkness and of shades ; 335
 Or, if your influence be quite dammed up
 With black usurping mists, some gentle taper,
 Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
 Of some clay habitation, visit us
 With thy long levelled rule of streaming light, 340
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
 Or Tyrian Cynosure.

SECOND BROTHER.

Or, if our eyes
 Be barred that happiness, might we but hear
 The folded flocks, penned in their wattled cotes,
 Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops, 345
 Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
 Count the night watches to his feathery dames,
 'Twould be some solace yet, some little cheering,
 In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.
 But, oh, that hapless virgin, our lost sister ! 350
 Where may she wander now, whither betake her
 From the chill dew, among rude burs and thistles ?
 Perhaps some cold bank is her bolster now,
 Or 'gainst the rugged bark of some broad elm
 Leans her unpillowed head, fraught with sad fears. 355
 What if in wild amazement and affright,
 Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
 Of savage hunger, or of savage heat ?

ELDER BROTHER.

Peace, brother ; be not over-exquisite
 To cast the fashion of uncertain evils : 360
 For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
 What need a man forestall his date of grief,

And run to meet what he would most avoid ?
 Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
 How bitter is such self-delusion ! 365
 I do not think my sister so to seek,
 Or so unprincipled in virtue's book,
 And the sweet peace that goodness bosoms ever,
 As that the single want of light and noise
 (Not being in danger, as I trust she is not) 370
 Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
 And put them into misbecoming plight.
 Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
 By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
 Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self, 375
 Oft seeks to sweet retired solitude ;
 Where, with her best nurse, Contemplation,
 She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
 That in the various bustle of resort
 Were all to-ruffled, and sometimes impaired. 380
 He that has light within his own clear breast
 May sit i' the centre, and enjoy bright day :
 But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts,
 Benighted walks under the mid-day sun ;
 Himself is his own dungeon.

SECOND BROTHER.

"Tis most true 385
 That musing Meditation most affects
 The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
 Far from the cheerful haunt of men and herds,
 And sits as safe as in a senate-house ;
 For who would rob a hermit of his weeds, 390
 His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
 Or do his gray hairs any violence ?
 But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree

Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
 Of dragon-watch with unenchanted eye, 395
 To save her blossoms; and defend her fruit,
 From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
 You may as well spread out the unsunned heaps
 Of miser's treasure by an outlaw's den,
 And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope 400
 Danger will wink on Opportunity,
 And let a single helpless maiden pass
 Uninjured in this wild surrounding waste.
 Of night or loneliness, it recks me not ;
 I fear the dread events that dog them both, 405
 Lest some ill-greeting touch attempt the person
 Of our unowned sister.

ELDER BROTHER.

I do not, brother,
 Infer as if I thought my sister's state
 Secure without all doubt or controversy ;
 (Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear 410
 Does arbitrate the event, my nature is
 That I incline to hope rather than fear,
 And gladly banish squint suspicion.
 My sister is not so defenceless left
 As you imagine ; she has a hidden strength, 415
 Which you remember not.

SECOND BROTHER.

What hidden strength
 Unless the strength of Heaven, if you mean that ?

ELDER BROTHER.

I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
 Which, if Heaven gave it, may be termed her own.
 'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity : 420
 She that has that is clad in complete steel,

And, like a quivered nymph with arrows keen,
 May trace huge forests, and unharboured heaths,
 Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds ;
 Where, through the sacred rays of chastity, 425
 No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaineer,
 Will dare to soil her virgin purity.

Yea, there, where very desolation dwells,
 By grotts and caverns shagged with horrid shades,
 She may pass on with unblenched majesty, 430
 Be it not done in pride, or in presumption.

Some say no evil thing that walks by night,
 In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
 Blue meagre hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost
 That breaks his magic chains at curfew time, 435
 No goblin, or swart faëry of the mine,
 Hath hurtful power o'er true virginity.

Do you believe me yet, or shall I call
 Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
 To testify the arms of chastity ? 440

Hence had the huntress Dian her dread bow,
 Fair silver-shafted queen for ever chaste,
 Wherewith she tamed the brinded lioness
 And spotted mountain pard, but set at naught
 The frivolous bolt of Cupid ; gods and men 445
 Feared her stern frown, and she was queen o' the
 woods.

What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
 That wise Minerva wore, unconquered virgin,
 Wherewith she freezed her foes to congealed stone,
 But rigid looks of chaste austerity, 450

And noble grace that dashed brute violence
 With sudden adoration and blank awe ?
 So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity

That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
 A thousand liveried angels lackey her, 455
 Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
 And, in clear dream and solemn vision,
 Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear ;
 Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
 Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape, 460
 The unpolluted temple of the mind,
 And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
 Till all be made immortal ; but when lust,
 By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
 But most by lewd and lavish act of sin, 465
 Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
 The soul grows clotted by contagion,
 Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite lose
 The divine property of her first being.
 Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp 470
 Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres,
 Lingered and sitting by a new made grave,
 As loth to leave the body that it loved,
 And linked itself by carnal sensuality
 To a degenerate and degraded state. 475

SECOND BROTHER.

How charming is divine philosophy !
 Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
 But musical as is Apollo's lute,
 And a perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
 Where no crude surfeit reigns. 480

ELDER BROTHER.

List ! list ! I hear
 Some far-off halloo break the silent air.

SECOND BROTHER.

Methought so too ; what should it be ?

ELDER BROTHER.

For certain,
 Either some one, like us, night-foundered here,
 Or else some neighbour woodman, or, at worst,
 Some roving robber calling to his fellows. 485

SECOND BROTHER.

Heaven keep my sister ! Again, again, and near !
 Best draw, and stand upon our guard.

ELDER BROTHER.

I'll halloo ;
 If he be friendly, he comes well ; if not,
 Defence is a good cause, and Heaven be for us !
 THE ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd*.
 That halloo I should know. What are you? speak: 490
 Come not too near ; you fall on iron stakes else.

SPIRIT.

What voice is that ? my young lord ? speak again.

SECOND BROTHER.

O brother, 'tis my father's shepherd, sure.

ELDER BROTHER.

Thyrsis ? whose artful strains have oft delayed
 The huddling brook to hear his madrigal, 495
 And sweetened every muskrose of the dale ?
 How cam'st thou here, good swain ? hath any ram
 Slipped from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
 Or straggling wether the pent flock forsook ?
 How couldst thou find this dark sequestered nook ! 500

SPIRIT.

O my loved master's heir, and his next joy,
 I came not here on such a trivial toy
 As a strayed ewe, or to pursue the stealth
 Of pilfering wolf ; not all the fleecy wealth
 That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought 505

To this my errand, and the care it brought.
 But, oh ! my virgin lady, where is she ?
 How chance she is not in your company ?

ELDER BROTHER.

To tell thee sadly, shepherd, without blame,
 Or our neglect, we lost her as we came. 510

SPIRIT.

Ay me unhappy ! then my fears are true.

ELDER BROTHER.

What fears, good Thyrsis ? Prithee briefly show.

SPIRIT.

I'll tell ye ; 'tis not vain or fabulous
 (Though so esteemed by shallow ignorance),
 What the sage poets, taught by the heavenly Muse, 515
 Storied of old in high immortal verse,
 Of dire chimeras and enchanted isles, *exist*
 And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell ;
 For such there be ; but unbelief is blind.

Within the navel of this hideous wood, 520
 Immured in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwells,
 Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
 Deep skilled in all his mother's witcheries,
 And here to every thirsty wanderer
 By sly enticement gives his baneful cup, 525
 With many murmurs mixed, whose pleasing poison
 The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
 And the inglorious likeness of a beast
 Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
 Charactered in the face. This have I learnt 530
 Tending my flocks hard by i' the hilly crofts
 That brow this bottom glade ; whence night by night
 He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
 Like stabled wolves, or tigers at their prey,

Doing abhorred rites to Hecate 535
 In their obscured haunts of inmost bowers.
 Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
 To inveigle and invite the unwary sense
 Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
 This evening late, by then the chewing flocks 540
 Had ta'en their supper on the savoury herb
 Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
 I sat me down to watch upon a bank
 With ivy canopied, and interwove
 With flaunting honeysuckle, and began, 545
 Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
 To meditate my rural minstrelsy,
 Till Fancy had her fill / but, ere a close,
 The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
 And filled the air with barbarous dissonance ; 550
 At which I ceased, and listened them a while,
 Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
 Gave respite to the drowsy frightened steeds
 That draw the litter of close-curtained Sleep.
 At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound 555
 Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,
 And stole upon the air, that even Silence
 Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
 Deny her nature, and be never more,
 Still to be so displaced. I was all ear, 560
 And took in strains that might create a soul
 Under the ribs of Death : / but, oh ! erelong
 Too well I did perceive it was the voice
 Of my most honoured lady, your dear sister.
 Amazed I stood, harrowed with grief and fear, 565
 And 'O poor hapless nightingale,' thought I,
 'How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare !'

Then down the lawns I ran with headlong haste,
 Through paths and turnings often trod by day ;
 Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place 570
 Where that damned wizard, hid in sly disguise
 (For so by certain signs I knew), had met
 Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
 The aidless innocent lady, his wished prey ;
 Who gently asked if he had seen such two, 575
 Supposing him some neighbour villager.
 Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guessed
 Ye were the two she meant ; with that I sprung
 Into swift flight, till I had found you here ;
 But further know I not.

SECOND BROTHER.

O night and shades ! 580
 How are ye joined with Hell in triple knot
 Against the unarmed weakness of one virgin,
 Alone and helpless ! Is this the confidence
 You gave me, brother ?

ELDER BROTHER.

Yes, and keep it still ;
 Lean on it safely : not a period 585
 Shall be unsaid for me : against the threats
 Of malice, or of sorcery, or that power
 Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm ;
 Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
 Surprised by unjust force, but not enthralled ; 590
 Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory :
 But evil on itself shall back recoil,
 And mix no more with goodness ; when at last,
 Gathered like scum, and settled to itself, 595
 It shall be in eternal restless change

Self-fed, and self-consumed : if this fail,
 The pillared firmament is rottenness,
 And earth's base built on stubble. But come, let's on !
 Against the opposing will and arm of Heaven 600
 May never this just sword be lifted up ;
 But for that damned magician, let him be girt
 With all the grisly legions that troop
 Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
 Harpies and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms 605
 'Twixt Africa and Ind, I'll find him out,
 And force him to restore his purchase back,
 Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
 Cursed as his life.

SPIRIT.

Alas ! good venturous youth,
 I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise ; 610
 But here thy sword can do thee little stead ;
 Far other arms and other weapons must
 Be those that quell the might of hellish charms :
 He with his bare wand can unthread thy joints
 And crumble all thy sinews.

ELDER BROTHER.

Why, prithee, shepherd, 615
 How durst thou then thyself approach so near
 As to make this relation ?

SPIRIT.

Care and utmost shifts
 How to secure the lady from surprisal,
 Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
 Of small regard to see to, yet well skilled 620
 In every virtuous plant and healing herb
 That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray.
 He loved me well, and oft would beg me sing ;

Which when I did, he on the tender grass
 Would sit, and hearken even to ecstasy ; 625
 And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
 And show me simples of a thousand names,
 Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
 Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
 But of divine effect, he culled me out ; 630
 The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
 But in another country, as he said,
 Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil :
 Unknown, and like esteemed, and the dull swain
 Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon : 635
 And yet more med'cinal is it than that moly
 That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.
 He called it hæmony, and gave it me,
 And bade me keep it as of sovran use
 'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast or damp, 640
 Or ghastly furies' apparition.
 I pursed it up, but little reckoning made,
 Till now that this extremity compelled :
 But now I find it true ; for by this means
 I knew the foul enchanter, though disguised, . 645
 Entered the very lime-twigs of his spells,
 And yet came off : if you have this about you
 (As I will give you when we go), you may
 Boldly assault the necromancer's hall ;
 Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood 650
 And brandished blade rush on him ; break his glass
 And shed the luscious liquor on the ground,
 But seize his wand. Though he and his cursed crew
 Fierce sign of battle make, and menace high,
 Or like the sons of Vulcan vomit smoke, 655
 Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

ELDER BROTHER.

Thyrsis, lead on apace, I'll follow thee ;
And some good angel bear a shield before us !

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness : soft music, tables spread with all dainties. COMUS appears with his rabble, and the LADY set in an enchanted chair, to whom he offers his glass, which she puts by, and goes about to rise.

COMUS.

Nay, lady, sit ; if I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chained up in alabaster, 660
And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.

LADY.

Fool, do not boast ;
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my mind
With all thy charms, although this corporal rind
Thou hast immanacled while Heaven sees good. 665

COMUS.

Why are you vexed, lady ? why do you frown ?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger ; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthful thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns 670
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrups mixed.
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone 675-
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena,
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limbs, which Nature lent 680

For gentle usage and soft delicacy ?
 But you invert the covenants of her trust,
 And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
 With that which you received on other terms ;
 Scorning the unexempt condition 685
 By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
 Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
 That have been tired all day without repast,
 And timely rest have wanted ; but, fair virgin,
 This will restore all soon.

LADY.

'Twill not, false traitor!
 'Twill not restore the truth and honesty 691
 That thou hast banished from thy tongue with lies.
 Was this the cottage and the safe abode
 Thou told'st me of? What grim aspects are these,
 These ugly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me! 695
 Hence with thy brewed enchantments, foul deceiver !
 Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
 With vizored falsehood and base forgery ?
 And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
 With lickerish baits fit to ensnare a brute ? 700
 Were it a draught for Juno when she banquets,
 I would not taste thy treasonous offer ; none
 But such as are good men can give good things ;
 And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-governed and wise appetite. 705

COMUS.

O foolishness of men ! that lend their ears
 To those budge doctors of the Stoic fur,
 And fetch their precepts from the Cynic tub,
 Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence.
 Wherefore did Nature pour her bounties forth 710

With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
 Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
 Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
 But all to please and sate the curious taste?
 And set to work millions of spinning worms, 715
 That in their green shops weave the smooth-haired
 silk,

To deck her sons : and, that no corner might
 Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loins
 She hatched the all-worshipped ore and precious gems
 To store her children with. If all the world 720
 Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,
 Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but frieze,
 The All-giver would be unthanked, would be un-
 praised,

Not half his riches known, and yet despised :
 And we should serve him as a grudging master, 725
 As a penurious niggard of his wealth ;
 And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,
 Who would be quite surcharged with her own weight,
 And strangled with her waste fertility ;
 The earth cumbered, and the winged air darked
 with plumes, 730

The herds would over-multitude their lords,
 The sea o'erfraught would swell, and the unsought
 diamonds

Would so emblaze the forehead of the deep,
 And so bestud with stars, that they below
 Would grow inured to light, and come at last 735
 To gaze upon the sun with shameless brows.
 List, lady ; be not coy, and be not cozened.
 With that same vaunted name Virginity.
 Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded;

But must be current ; and the good thereof 740
 Consists in mutual and partaken bliss,
 Unsavoury in the enjoyment of itself ;
 If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
 It withers on the stalk with languished head.
 Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown 745
 In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
 Where most may wonder at the workmanship ;
 It is for homely features to keep home,
 They had their name thence ; coarse complexions
 And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply 750
 The sampler, and to tease the huswife's wool.
 What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
 Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn ?
 There was another meaning in these gifts ; 754
 Think what, and be advised ; you are but young yet.

LADY.

I had not thought to have unlocked my lips
 In this unhallowed air, but that this juggler
 Would think to charm my judgment, as mine eyes,
 Obtruding false rules pranked in reason's garb.
 I hate when Vice can bolt her arguments, 760
 And Virtue has no tongue to check her pride.
 Impostor ! do not charge most innocent Nature,
 As if she would her children should be riotous
 With her abundance. She, good cateress,
 Means her provision only to the good, 765
 That live according to her sober laws,
 And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
 If every just man that now pines with want
 Had but a moderate and beseeing share
 Of that which lewdly pampered Luxury 770
 Now heaps upon some few with vast excess,

Nature's full blessings would be well dispensed
 In unsuperfluous even proportion,
 And she no whit encumbered with her store ;
 And then the Giver would be better thanked, 775
 His praise due paid : for swinish Gluttony
 Ne'er looks to Heaven amidst his gorgeous feast,
 But with besotted base ingratitude
 Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on ?
 Or have I said enough ? To him that dares 780
 Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
 Against the sun-clad power of Chastity,
 Fain would I something say, yet to what end ?
 Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
 The sublime notion, and high mystery, 785
 That must be uttered to unfold the sage
 And serious doctrine of Virginity;
 And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
 More happiness than this thy present lot.
 Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetoric, 790
 That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence ;
 Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinced ;
 Yet, should I try, the uncontrolled worth
 Of this pure cause would kindle my rapt spirits
 To such a flame of sacred vehemence 795
 That dumb things would be moved to sympathize,
 And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and
 shake,
 Till all thy magic structures, reared so high,
 Were shattered into heaps o'er thy false head.

COMUS.

She fables not ; I feel that I do fear 800
 Her words set off by some superior power ;
 And though not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew

Dips me all o'er, as when the wrath of Jove
 Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus
 To some of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble, 805
 And try her yet more strongly. Come, no more ;
 This is mere moral babble, and direct
 Against the canon laws of our foundation ;
 I must not suffer this ; yet 'tis but the lees
 And settlings of a melancholy blood : 810
 But this will cure all straight ; one sip of this
 Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight,
 Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste.

The BROTHERS rush in with swords drawn, wrest his
 glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground ;
 his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven
 in. The ATTENDANT SPIRIT comes in.

SPIRIT.

What ! have you let the false enchanter 'scape ?
 Oh, yemistook ; ye should have snatched his wand, 815
 And bound him fast. Without his rod reversed,
 And backward mutters of dissevering power,
 We cannot free the lady that sits here
 In stony fetters fixed and motionless.
 Yet stay ; be not disturbed ; now I bethink me, 820
 Some other means I have which may be used,
 Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
 The soothest shepherd that e'er piped on plains.

There is a gentle nymph not far from hence, 824
 That with moist curb sways the smooth Severnstream ;
 Sabrina is her name ; a virgin pure ;
 Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
 That had the sceptre from his father Brute.
 She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
 Of her enraged stepdame, Guendolen, 830
 Commended her fair innocence to the flood

That stayed her flight with his cross-flowing course.
 The water-nymphs, that in the bottom played,
 Held up their pearled wrists, and took her in,
 Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall ; 835
 Who, piteous of her woes, reared her lank head,
 And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
 In nectared lavers strewed with asphodel ;
 And through the porch and inlet of each sense
 Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she revived, 840
 And underwent a quick immortal change,
 Made goddess of the river. Still she retains
 Her maiden gentleness, and oft at eve
 Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
 Helping all urchin blasts and ill-luck signs 845
 That the shrewd meddling elf delights to make,
 Which she with precious vialled liquors heals :
 For which the shepherds at their festivals
 Carol her goodness loud in rustic lays,
 And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream 850
 Of pansies, pinks, and gaudy daffodils.
 And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
 The clasping charm, and thaw the numbing spell,
 If she be right invoked in warbled song ;
 For maidenhood she loves, and will be swift 855
 To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
 In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
 And add the power of some adjuring verse.

Song.

Sabrina fair,
 Listen where thou art sitting 860
 Under the glassy, cool, translucent wave,
 In twisted braids of lilies knitting
 The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair ;

Listen, for dear honour's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake, 865

Listen and save !

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus ;
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestic pace ; 870
By hoary Nereus' wrinkled look,
And the Carpathian wizard's hook ;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old soothsaying Glaucus' spell ;
By Leucothea's lovely hands, 875
And her son that rules the strands ;
By Thetis' tinsel-slippered feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet ;
By dead Parthenope's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb, 880
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks,
Sleeking her soft alluring locks ;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance ;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosy head 885
From thy coral-paven bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answered have.

Listen and save !

SABRINA rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings.

By the rushy-fringed bank, 890
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays ;
Thick set with agate, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays ; 895

Whilst from off the waters fleet
 Thus I set my printless feet
 O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
 That bends not as I tread ;
 Gentle swain, at thy request 900
 I am here.

SPIRIT.

Goddess dear,
 We implore thy powerful hand
 To undo the charmed band
 Of true virgin here distressed, 905
 Through the force, and through the wile,
 Of unblessed enchanter vile.

SABRINA.

Shepherd, 'tis my office best
 To help ensnared chastity.
 Brightest lady, look on me ; 910
 Thus I sprinkle on thy breast
 Drops that from my fountain pure
 I have kept, of precious cure ;
 Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
 Thrice upon thy rubied lip : 915
 Next this marble venom'd seat,
 Smeared with gums of glutinous heat,
 I touch with chaste palms moist and cold :
 Now the spell hath lost his hold ;
 And I must haste, ere morning hour, 920
 To wait in Amphitrite's bower.

SABRINA descends, and the LADY rises out of her seat.

SPIRIT.

Virgin, daughter of Loctrine,
 Sprung of old Anchises' line,
 May thy brimmed waves for this

Their full tribute never miss 925
 From a thousand petty rills,
 That tumble down the snowy hills :
 Summer drouth or singed air
 Never scorch thy tresses fair ;
 Nor wet October's torrent flood 930
 Thy molten crystal fill with mud ;
 May thy billows roll ashore
 The beryl and the golden ore ;
 May thy lofty head be crowned
 With many a tower and terrace round, 935
 And here and there thy banks upon
 With groves of myrrh and cinnamon.
 Come, lady, while Heaven lends us grace,
 Let us fly this cursed place,
 Lest the sorcerer us entice 940
 With some other new device.
 Not a waste or needless sound
 Till we come to holier ground :
 I shall be your faithful guide
 Through this gloomy covert wide, 945
 And not many furlongs thence
 Is your father's residence,
 Where this night are met in state
 Many a friend to gratulate
 His wished presence ; and beside 950
 All the swains that there abide
 With jigs and rural dance resort ;
 We shall catch them at their sport,
 And our sudden coming there
 Will double all their mirth and cheer : 955
 Come, let us haste, the stars grow high
 But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow town and the President's castle; then come in country dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, with the two BROTHERS and the LADY.

Song.

SPIRIT.

Back, shepherds, back ! enough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday :
Here be, without duck or nod, 960
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns and on the leas. 965

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble lord and lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight ;
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own ;
Heaven hath timely tried their youth, 970
Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual Folly and Intemperance. 975

The dances ended, the SPIRIT epiloguises.

SPIRIT.

To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky :
There I suck the liquid air 980
All amidst the gardens fair

Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
 That sing about the golden tree :
 Along the crisped shades and bowers
 Revels the spruce and jocund Spring ; 985
 The Graces and the rosy-bosomed Hours
 Thither all their bounties bring ;
 There eternal Summer dwells,
 And west winds with musky wing
 About the cedarn alleys fling 990
 Nard and cassia's balmy smells.
 Iris there with humid bow
 Waters the odorous banks, that blow
 Flowers of more mingled hue
 Than her purpled scarf can show ; 995
 And drenches with Elysian dew
 (List, mortals, if your ears be true)
 Beds of hyacinth and roses,
 Where young Adonis oft reposes,
 Waxing well of his deep wound, 1000
 In slumber soft, and on the ground
 Sadly sits the Assyrian queen :
 But far above in spangled sheen
 Celestial Cupid, her famed son, advanced
 Holds his dear Psyche sweet entranced 1005
 After her wandering labours long,
 Till free consent the gods among
 Make her his eternal bride,
 And from her fair unspotted side
 Two blissful twins are to be born, 1010
 Youth and Joy ; so Jove hath sworn.
 But now my task is smoothly done,
 I can fly, or I can run
 Quickly to the green earth's end,

Where the bowed welkin slow doth bend ; 1015
 And from thence can soar as soon
 To the corners of the moon.

Mortals that would follow me,
 Love Virtue ; she alone is free :
 She can teach ye how to climb 1020
 Higher than the sphery chime ;
 Or if Virtue feeble were,
 Heaven itself would stoop to her.

NOTES.

NOTES.

ABBREVIATIONS.

A. S. = Anglo Saxon.	l. ll. = line, lines.
Bret. = Breton.	L. = Latin.
cp. = compare.	Low L. = Low Latin.
F. = French.	M. E. = Middle English.
F. Q. = Faery Queene.	O. F. = Old French.
fr. = from.	O. H. G. = Old High German.
G. = German.	orig. = originally.
Gael. = Gaelic.	p. = page.
Gk. = Greek.	Pers. = Persian.
Icel. = Icelandic.	pl. = plural.
i.e. = id est, that is.	pp. = past participle.
Ital. = Italian.	W. = Welsh.

'A wild wood.' Spenser represents the monster Error as having her den in a wood.—*F. Q.* i. i.

l. 2. 'Those,' the well known. The spirits are supposed to be so well known that a defining clause is unnecessary.

l. 4. Though 'serene' seems to have an accent on the first syllable, the line sounds better when read with a slight pause at 'calm,' and with the usual accent on 'serene'.

l. 5. 'Dim.' As compared with 'regions mild of calm and serene air'.

l. 7. 'Pestered,' plagued. The following is Professor Skeat's note on pester:—'Formerly to encumber, clog; and short for impester; O. F. empestrer, to pester, intangle, incumber. Orig. to hobble a horse at pasture; Low L. im- (in), on, upon; pastorium, a clog, for a horse at pasture; L. pastus, pp. of pascere, to feed.'

- 'Pinfold,' a pound, an enclosure for strayed cattle.
 'For pindfold; A. S. pyndan, to shut in; and fold.'—Skeat.
- l. 8. The construction demands the insertion of 'they' at the beginning of this line, and of 'where' after 'and,' in line 6.
- l. 9. See Rev. iv. 4.
- l. 10. 'Mortal change.' Life here is regarded as a variety of existence.
- l. 11. 'Enthroned.' A dissyllable. 'As Mr. Ross points out, this passage is an instance of Milton's habit of expressing Christian doctrine in the language of classic mythology.'—Masson.
- l. 12. 'Be.' For 'are'.
- l. 13. 'Golden key.' In *Lycidas*, Milton says of S. Peter:
 'Two massy keys he bore, of metals twain,
 The golden opes, the iron shuts amain' (ll. 110, 111).
- l. 16. 'Ambrosial,' immortal. Gk. α , not, and $\mu\beta\rho\omicron\rho\acute{o}s$, mortal. 'Weeds,' garments. A. S. wæd, a garment.
- l. 18. 'After his victory over the Titans, Zeus [high Jove] shared the empire of the world with his two brothers, Poseidon [Neptune] and Hades [nether Jove]. The former he made ruler of the ocean and waters; the latter he set over the infernal regions; everything else he retained for himself.'—Seemann. In the *Iliad*, Neptune describes the apportionment as having been determined 'by lot'.
- l. 21. 'Isles.' O. F. isle; L. insula, an island. By confusion with isle, an 's' has been inserted in island A. S. ígland.
- l. 22. Cp.
 'And, broad between them rolled,
 The gallant Firth the eye might note,
 Whose islands on its bosom float,
 Like emeralds chased in gold'.
 —Scott, *Marmion*, iv. 30.
- l. 25. I.e. he divides the islands in a regular way among

the several gods paying him tribute. 'Several,' separate.

1. 27. 'This isle,' Great Britain.
1. 29. 'Quarters.' Here the word conveys the general idea of division. 'Blue-haired.' 'Can there be a recollection of "blue" as the British colour, inherited from the old times of the blue-stained Britons who fought with Cæsar? "Green-haired" is the usual poetic epithet for Neptune and his subordinates.'—Masson.
1. 30. Wales, in the west.
1. 31. 'Peer,' the Earl of Bridgewater. 'Mickle,' great; A. S. micel.
1. 33. Concrete illustration of this brief, general account of the Welsh is supplied in Scott's *The Betrothed*.
1. 34. 'Offspring.' Spenser uses this word to mean parents; see *F. Q.* ii. ix. 60. 'Nursed in princely lore,' well educated.
1. 35. A reference to the ceremonial attending the coming of the Earl of Bridgewater, Viceroy of Wales, to his headquarters at Ludlow Castle.
1. 36. 'New-intrusted sceptre.' The Viceroy was appointed in 1631, but did not enter on his duties for some time.
1. 37. 'Perplexed,' entangled. F. perplex, 'intangled, perplexed'; L. per, thoroughly, and plexus, entangled.
1. 41. 'Sovran,' sovereign. O. F. sovereign; Low L. superanus, chief.
1. 45. 'In hall or bower.' The hall was presided over by the chieftain, the bower by his lady. These two places are referred to again and again by Scott.
11. 46-50. 'The most celebrated among the myths which testify to the wondrous power of Dionysus [Bacchus] is the story of the punishment of the Tyrrhenian pirates. On the occasion of his passage from Icaria to Naxos, these pirates put Dionysus in chains, purposing to take him to Italy, and

there sell him as a slave. At a nod from the youthful god, the chains fell from his limbs; he appeared as a lion, while a bear was seen at the other end of the ship. Vines and ivy tendrils wound themselves round the mast and sails of the ship, which stood still, whilst the strains of the nymphs burst forth. The sailors, terrified by the transformation of the god, leapt overboard, and were changed into dolphins.'—Seemann.

- l. 46. 'That' should be 'who'; restrictive clauses may not be attached to proper names.
- l. 48. A Latin construction, for 'after the transformation of the Tuscan mariners'. Cp. Ten days after the capture of Thebes—Decimo die post captas Thebas. Etruria, Tuscia, or Tyrrhenia was a country in Italy.
- l. 50. Circe's island, *Aeaea*, off the coast of Latium, afterwards joined to the mainland and forming the promontory of *Circeii*.
- ll. 51-53. This is a reference to the fate of Ulysses' companions, as told in the *Odyssey*, bk. x.
- l. 55. 'His soft hair, which falls about his shoulders in delicate ringlets, is generally intertwined with a garland of vine leaves or ivy.'—Seemann.
- l. 58. 'Comus,' the god of festive mirth and joy, occurs only in the later times of antiquity. Gk. *κῶμος*, a revel.
- l. 59. 'Frolic,' adjective, sportive. This is the original use. 'Of' = on account of.
- l. 60. 'Celtic and Iberian fields,' i.e. France and Spain.
- l. 61. 'Ominous,' dangerous. The wood is in Shropshire.
- l. 65. 'Orient' (eastern), bright.
- l. 66. 'Drouth of,' thirst due to. For drought. The word occurs again in l. 928, with the meaning 'want of water'.
- l. 67. 'Fond,' foolish.
- l. 71. 'Ounce,' a kind of lynx.
- l. 72. 'Here Milton deviates from the representation in

the *Odyssey*, where the whole bodies of Circe's victims are changed into brute-forms. It is an acute remark of Newton that the deviation served stage purposes. The crew of Comus would come in with him in the performance at Ludlow Castle; to have trotted them in as beasts entire would have been inconvenient; it was enough that they should have masks on, resembling beasts' heads, like Bottom in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.—Masson.

l. 74. In the Homeric story, the companions of Ulysses know their condition.

ll. 74-77. Cp. Spenser, *F. Q.* ii. xii. 86. When the Bower of Bliss is invaded, and the degraded victims of Acrasia are restored to their natural shape,

'One above the rest in special,

That had an hog beene late, hight Grille by name,

Repined greatly, and did him miscall,

That had from hoggish forme him brought to naturall'.

The lesson taught by Grille is that taught by the crew of Comus, 'the degradation and loss of human qualities, of self-respect, of aims above sense, which are the natural outcome of the life of sensual delights'.

l. 79. 'Adventurous,' likely to afford adventures, dangerous.

l. 80. A picturesque line. Note the alliteration.

l. 88. 'Iris,' the rainbow. 'Woof,' the weft, the threads woven across the warp. M. E. oof, with 'w' prefixed. A. S. *ōwef*. A. S. *ō*, on, upon, and wef, from wefan, to weave.

ll. 84-91. Henry Lawes, who supplied the music and was general manager, also took the part of the Attendant Spirit, and thus here compliments himself.

l. 88. 'Nor of less faith,' i.e. as faithful as he is skilled in music.

11. 89-91. I.e. he is the most likely person to be at hand to give assistance.
1. 92. 'Viewless,' invisible.
1. 93. I.e. the evening star.
1. 95. 'The post Homeric poets endow him [Apollo] with a sun-chariot drawn by four fiery horses.'—Seemann.
1. 96. There was a belief that the sea hissed as the sun-chariot plunged into it.
1. 97. 'Steep,' deep. Cp. 'the high seas'.
1. 99. 'Pole,' sky.
1. 100. 'Though Homer and Hesiod do not attempt to explain how he passed from the west where he sets, to the east where he rises, later poets obviate the difficulty by making him sail round half the earth in a golden boat (according to others, a golden bed); and thus he was supposed again to arrive at the east.'—Seemann.
1. 105. 'Rosy twine,' twined roses.
1. 110. 'Saws,' maxims. A. S. *sagu*, a saying. 'Rigour,' 'Advice,' &c., represent, by Synecdoche, persons rigorous, prone to give advice, &c.
1. 111. 'That.' In modern English, 'who' would here be the correct word.
1. 113. A reference to the music of the spheres. Cp. 1. 1021. Plato says, a siren sits on each planet, all the sirens singing harmoniously.
1. 115. 'Sounds,' straits. A. S. *sund*.
1. 116. 'Morrice,' Moorish, a dance.
1. 117. 'Shelves,' rock ledges.
1. 118. Note how the sound of this line suits what is described. 'Pert,' lively. W. *perc*, trim. 'Dapper,' nimble; a Dutch word.
1. 121. 'Wakes.' 'A "wake" in old England was the watch or sitting-up till late before one of the Church holidays; hence a merry-making.'—Masson.
1. 129. 'Cotyto,' a Thracian divinity, whose festival was celebrated by night with licentious revelry.

1. 132. 'Stygian,' adjective from Styx, one of the rivers in the nether world. 'Spets,' spits.
1. 135. 'Hecate' was supposed to preside over all nocturnal horrors.
1. 139. 'Nice,' fastidious. L. nescius, ignorant. It has come through O. F. nice, lazy, simple, and M. E. nice, foolish, simple, fastidious, delicious. 'The Indian steep,' in the east.
1. 140. I.e. the dawn just appearing.
1. 141. 'Tell-tale.' The Sun revealed to Vulcan the faithlessness of his wife Venus.
1. 144. 'Round,' dance.
1. 151. 'Trains,' enticements. L. trahere, to drag.
1. 154. 'Spongy air.' As drinking in his spells.
1. 155. 'Blear,' deceiving. To blear is to blur, dim. Different from blear in blear-sighted.
1. 156. 'Presentments,' things presented.
1. 157. 'Quaint,' odd. L. cognitus, known; confused with comptus, neat.
11. 160-164. Note how excellently these lines describe the insidious growth of the dominion of sensuality.
1. 161. 'Glozing,' flattering, deceiving. Gk. γλῶσσα, the tongue.
1. 167. 'Gear,' business.
1. 175. 'Granges,' granaries. L. granum, corn.
1. 176. 'Pan,' god of shepherds.
1. 178. 'Swilled,' drunken.
1. 179. 'Wassailers,' revellers. Northern E. wæs hæþ, be whole, a drinking salutation.
1. 180. 'Feet,' by Synecdoche, for the whole person.
1. 185. 'Thicket side;' 's' is dropped.
1. 188. 'Then.' This word is not necessary to the sense.
1. 189. 'Votarist,' one vowed to a pilgrimage. 'Palmer,' one bearing a palm-branch in memory of having been in the Holy Land.
1. 190. 'Phœbus,' Apollo, the sun-god.
1. 195. 'Stole,' for stolen.
1. 198. Note the change of construction. It should run

'That . . . heaven, and whose lamps she filled'.

1. 203. 'Rife,' prevalent. 'Perfect,' clearly heard.
1. 204. 'Single darkness,' darkness only.
1. 210. The position of 'well' is unusual, contrary to the principle regulating the place of qualifying adjuncts, and somewhat spoils the contrast between 'startle' and 'astound'.
1. 212. 'Siding,' supporting. 'Conscience,' a trisyllable.
1. 215. 'Chastity.' A variation from the great Trinity, Faith, Hope, and Charity.
1. 216. 'Ye.' In modern English 'ye' would be 'you'.
1. 225. 'Casts,' for 'does cast'.
1. 231. 'Airy shell,' the atmosphere.
1. 232. 'Meander,' a river in Asia Minor, proverbial for its wanderings. Hence the verb 'meander'. \
1. 234. 'Love-lorn,' deprived of her mate; perhaps of her loved ones, i.e. her young. 'Lorn' is A. S. *loren*, pp. of *leósan*, to lose.
1. 235. 'Mourneth,' sings mournfully.
1. 237. 'Narcissus' was insensible to love, on which account, Echo, who loved him, died of grief. For this Narcissus was punished by being made to fall so violently in love with his own image in a fountain that he pined away, and was changed into the flower Narcissus.
1. 241. 'Parley,' speech. When Milton calls Echo 'daughter of the sphere,' he means she is the child of the air.
1. 243. 'Resounding grace,' grace due to re-echoing.
1. 248. 'His,' for its. 'His' was the genitive of A. S. *hit*, neuter of *he*.
1. 252. 'It,' Darkness.
1. 253. This is an interference with the ancient mythology; the Sirens had nothing to do with Circe. They were sea nymphs, who by their songs lured people to death. Circe had her attendant nymphs, or Naiads.

1. 254. 'Kirtled'. Kirtle, A. S. cyrtel, a sort of gown or petticoat.
1. 257. 'Elysium,' the abode of the blessed. 'Scylla,' a rock on the south-west coast of Italy; the island of the Sirens lay between this rock and Aeaea. In the rock was a cave inhabited by a monster Scylla, which barked like a dog. Opposite was another rock, where dwelt another monster Charybdis.
1. 262. 'Home-felt,' heart-felt. Cp. home-thrust.
1. 264. 'Heard' is a curious word to use here.
1. 267. After 'unless' read 'thou be'.
1. 268. 'Dwell'st' for dwells. 'Sylvan,' Silvanus, a god of fields and forests.
1. 270. Her presence is of course suggested as the cause of the wood's 'prosperous growth'.
1. 271. 'Ill is lost.' A Latin form of expression.
1. 274. 'To regain,' an infinitive, object of shift, which has here a verbal force. 'My severed company,' the companions severed from me.
11. 277-290. These lines read like a parody of certain portions of Greek tragic dialogue.
1. 279. 'Near-ushering,' leading by a short distance.
1. 290. 'Hebe' was the goddess of youth, and cup-bearer to the gods till Ganymede was assigned that office.
1. 292. A picturesque line. ✓
1. 293. 'Swinked,' tired. A. S. swincan.
1. 294. 'Mantling,' spreading.
1. 297. 'Port,' bearing.
1. 299. 'Element,' sky.
1. 301. 'Plighted,' folded. L. plicare, to fold.
1. 304. Note the omission of 'to' before 'find'. Common in Shakespeare, an Americanism, and creeping into modern English.
1. 311. 'Alley,' walk. F. aller. Further derivation disputed. L. adnare, to swim to, is suggested.
1. 312. 'Dingle,' a narrow valley between two hills.

Dingle is another form of dimble, a variant of dimple.

1. 313. 'Bosky,' bushy. Cp. M. E. busk, a bush. 'Bourn,' watercourse.
1. 315. 'Attendance,' attendants. A Synecdoche.
1. 328. 'That.' The equivalent of an adverb; the whole clause is adverbial, and modifies 'less'.
1. 329. 'Square,' adapt.
1. 334. 'Disinherit,' dispossess. 'That' should be 'who'.
1. 338. 'Wicker-hole,' wicker-crossed aperture.
1. 340. A picturesque line.
11. 341, 342. 'Calisto,' daughter of a King of Arcadia, was changed into the Great Bear, and her son Arcas into the Lesser Bear, Cynosura. The Phœnician sailors steered by the pole-star, in Cynosura; hence the epithet Tyrian. The Greeks steered by the Great Bear, the Star of Arcady.
1. 343. Read 'from' after 'barred'.
1. 345. The 'stops' are the holes in the oaten pipe.
1. 355. Read 'she' before 'leans'. 'Fraught with,' full of.
1. 359. 'Over-exquisite,' too inquisitive.
1. 360. 'Cast,' predict.
1. 361. 'So,' these—namely, evils.
1. 366. 'To seek,' at a loss.
1. 367. 'Unprincipled in,' without knowledge of.
1. 368. 'Bosoms,' holds in its bosom.
1. 369. 'As' is superfluous.
1. 370. The absolute construction; supply 'she' with 'being'.
11. 373-5. Cp. 'Virtue gives her selfe light, through darkenesse for to wade'.—Spenser, *F. Q. i. i. 12*.
1. 376. 'Seeks to,' resorts to. A common construction in the authorised translation.
1. 377. 'Contemplation'; five syllables.
1. 378. 'Plumes,' arranges.
1. 380. 'To-ruffled.' 'To' means asunder, in pieces. 'A certain woman cast a piece of millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull.'—*Judges ix. 53*. All = quite.

1. 382. 'Centre,' of the earth.
1. 386. 'Affects,' prefers.
1. 393. 'The golden apples, which were under the guardianship of the Hesperides, or nymphs of the west, constituted the marriage present which Hera had received from Gæa on the occasion of her marriage with Zeus. They were closely guarded by the terrible dragon Ladon.'—Seemann.
1. 334. 'Had need the guard,' would have need of the guard.
1. 395. 'Unenchanted,' that cannot be enchanted.
1. 401. 'Wink on,' refuse to see.
1. 404. 'It recks me not,' I take no account.
1. 408. 'Infer,' reason.
1. 409. 'Without,' beyond.
1. 413. 'Squint suspicion'—so Spenser.
1. 418. 'Yet,' in addition.
1. 419. 'If,' though. Another meaning of 'if' is seen in, 'If you sung in summer, dance in winter,' where 'if' means 'since'. In such cases 'if' is always followed by the indicative mood.
1. 421. 'Cómplete steel'. Note the accent.
1. 422. A reference to the huntress goddess, Diana. 'Her devotion to the chase is clearly betokened by the quiver and bow which she generally bears.'—Seemann. 'Quivered'; a good example of the possessive force of 'ed' in such cases. Cp. talented, moated, loved, &c.
1. 423. 'Trace,' pass through. 'Unharboured,' wanting places of shelter. Icel. herbergi, army-shelter, harbour. Cp. 'The ruins of the abbey are . . . half covered with ivy and elderbushes, the harbours of several solitary birds'.—*Spectator*, No. 110.
1. 424. 'Infamous.' Note the place of the accent.
1. 426. 'Mountaineer.' Apparently here a name of ill-odour. 'Bandite.' Note the spelling.
1. 429. 'Shagged with horrid shades,' with horrid shades like rough hair. A. S. sceacga, hair.

1. 430. 'Unblenched,' fearless. Blench, to shrink from, is 'A. S. blencan, to deceive; orig. "to make to blink," to impose on; thus to *blench* is the causal verb, "to make to blink"; but it was confused with *blink*, to wink, hence, to flinch'.—Skeat.
1. 434. 'Unlaid,' not restrained from wandering.
1. 435. 'The old custom of ringing the curfew at eight or nine o'clock in the evening (originally the signal for people to put out or cover up their fires, couvrefeu) was kept up in various parts of England in Milton's time.'—Masson. 'This is the foul fiend Flippertigibbet; he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock.'—*Lear*, iii. 4.
1. 436. 'Goblin,' demon. Gk. *κόβαλος*, hence Low L. cobalus and German kobold, demon, the mineral cobalt, so called because considered poisonous. Another form of the German word is kobalt, cobalt.
1. 439. Leaving Gothic legend, Milton passes to classic mythology.
1. 440. 'Testify' is here transitive.
1. 441. 'In one of Lucian's dialogues, Cupid expresses his fear of Minerva and the Gorgon on her breast, and adds that Diana was so swift in the chase that he could not overtake her.'—Browne.
1. 443. 'Brinded,' brindled, streaked. 'Icel. brandr, a brand, flame, sword. Thus brinded = branded.'—Skeat.
1. 444. 'Pard,' leopard.
1. 445. 'Cupid,' the god of love. 'His characteristic weapon is a golden bow, with which he shoots forth his arrows from secret lurking places.'—Seemann.
1. 447. There were three *Gorgons*, Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa; 'instead of hair their heads were covered with hissing serpents; and they had wings, brazen claws, and enormous teeth'. The faces of these creatures were so fearful that whoever looked on them became 'congealed stone'. Only

one of the three, namely, Medusa, was mortal; by the help of the gods, Perseus managed to cut off Medusa's head, and to escape the pursuit of the other Gorgons. The head he presented to Athene (Minerva), the goddess of war, wisdom, &c., who wore it in her breastplate or shield.

- l. 451. 'Dashed,' confounded.
- l. 453. Milton passes now to Christian conception; it is characteristic of him to mingle pagan and Christian notions.
- l. 455. 'Lackey,' attend.
- l. 459. 'Of,' frequent. Adverb as adjective, 'Heavenly,' of heaven.
- l. 460. 'Begin,' subjunctive, expressing what is future and therefore uncertain. Cp. 'turns,' l. 462, and 'lose,' l. 468.
- l. 468. 'Imbodies and imbrutes,' takes on the properties of body and of brute. Verbs containing this prefix, 'im' (in), are usually transitive.
- l. 470. 'Such'. Understand 'such clotted souls'.
- l. 473. 'It.' Milton passes to the case of each individual 'clotted soul'. Two constructions are mixed up. 'Each lingering,' &c., would put matters right.
- l. 474. And as itself linked, i.e. as well as the body.
- l. 476. A reference to Plato's philosophy, a portion of which Milton has just paraphrased in ll. 467-475.
- l. 483. 'Night-foundered,' swallowed up in night, as a ship founders at sea. Founder is from F. fond, L. fundus, bottom.
- l. 490. 'That halloo I should know.' These words, uttered by the Elder Brother, are rather puzzling in the absence of an original stage-direction enjoining the Attendant Spirit to halloo just before entering. It is of this halloo that the Brother says, 'That halloo I should know'.
- l. 494. 'Thyrsis,' be it remembered, was represented by Lawes, the composer of the music for Comus. 'Artful,' skilful.

1. 495. 'Huddling brook.' The waters, delaying to hear the music, are huddled together; or, huddling means hurrying. 'Madrigal,' here simply a pastoral song. Gk. *μάνδρα*, a fold. Mr. Browne remarks that 'both Lawes and the elder Milton composed madrigals of the elaborate kind'.
11. 495-512. Nine rhymed couplets.
1. 501. 'Next joy,' nearest and (therefore) dearest source of joy.
1. 502. 'On,' because of.
1. 503. 'Stealth of pilfering wolf' = stealthy pilfering wolf.
1. 506. 'To,' compared with.
1. 508. 'How chance' = How does it chance that.
1. 509. 'Sadly,' seriously.
1. 511. 'Me.' Object of an omitted verb.
1. 515. 'Sage poets.' Homer and Virgil, for example.
1. 516. 'Storied,' narrated.
1. 517. 'The chimæra, a monster with a lion's head, a goat's body, and a dragon's tail, is placed by Virgil (with the Hydra, the Centaurs, &c.) at the gates of Hell.'—Browne. See Professor Conington's translation of the *Æneid*, fourth edition, p. 185.
1. 520. 'Navel,' centre.
1. 526. 'Murmurs,' murmured charms.
1. 529. 'Mintage,' coinage.
1. 530. 'Charáctered,' impressed. Note the accent. The meaning is that what has been stamped by reason in the face of man is effaced; his countenance ceases to be of reason's coining.
1. 531. 'Hilly crofts,' fields on the slopes. A. S. croft, a field.
1. 532. 'Whence,' from which bottom glade.
1. 533. 'Monstrous rout,' crew of monsters. Cp.—
'Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world'.
—*Lycidas*, ll. 157, 158.
1. 539. 'Unweeting,' unwitting, not knowing of their danger.

1. 540. 'By then,' about the time when.
1. 542. 'Knot-grass,' so called from its jointed (knotted) stem. 'Dew-besprent,' besprinkled with dew. Cp. 'Morne now, my Muse, now morne with teares besprint'.—Spenser, *Shepherd's Calendar*, November (l. 111).
1. 548. 'Sat me.' The pronoun is superfluous.
1. 547. 'Meditate,' practise. Cp. 'And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?'—*Lycidas*, l. 66.
1. 548. 'Ere a close,' before the end of the music.
1. 551. 'Listened.' Here transitive. 'Them,' the people making the noise.
1. 552. See lines 145-150.
1. 553. 'Respite,' i.e. from disturbance. On the ground that drowsiness (even though understood as the habitual state) and fright could scarcely co-exist, Professor Masson reads 'drowsy-flighted,' drowsily flying.
1. 555. The Lady's song. See lines 230-243.
1. 558. 'Took,' taken, charmed. 'Ware,' aware; A. S. wær. This is the original form of aware, and produced wary.
1. 560. 'Still,' always. A common meaning in poetry. The meaning is, Silence was willing to cease to exist, if her place was to be taken by such music.
1. 565. 'Harrowed,' distressed.
1. 568. 'Lawns,' open spaces in the wood. Of disputed origin. G. land, open country; and Bret. lann, a bushy shrub (plural lannon, waste lands), have been suggested. There are also Irish lann, an enclosed piece of ground; W. llan, and Gael. lann, an enclosure, piece of land.
1. 571. 'Hid in sly disguise.' See lines 164-169.
1. 572. 'For so by certain signs I knew.' See lines 644-647.
1. 575. 'Such two.' Supply 'as she described'.
1. 585. 'Period,' sentence. The Elder Brother does not propose to retract what he has said.
1. 590. 'Enthralled,' enslaved.

11. 596-599. *A great passage.*

1. 591. 'Meant most harm' = meant to do most harm.
1. 592. 'Happy trial.' A highly condensed phrase, for 'trial sure to end in a happy result'.
1. 595. 'Gathered like scum.' Separated from goodness as scum from what produces it.
1. 600. 'Opposing will and arm.' Condensed, 'will and arm, if they should oppose'.
1. 601. An inversion for 'This just sword may never be lifted up'.
1. 603. 'Legions.' A trisyllable.
1. 604. 'Acheron,' Hell. Acheron was one of the rivers in the lower world.
1. 605. 'Harpies,' loathsome, bird-like creatures. 'Hydras,' water-snakes.
1. 606. 'Ind,' India.
1. 607. 'Purchase,' what is stolen.
1. 608. 'Curls.' A mark of Comus' voluptuous nature. See line 54 and note on line 55.
1. 611. 'Stead,' good. Stead really means place; cp. 'instead,' 'to stand one in good stead'.
1. 614. 'Unthread,' loosen.
1. 617. Elliptical: 'As to be able to make this relation'. 'Relation,' narrative.
1. 619. This 'shepherd lad' has been thought to be Diodati, a close friend of Milton when young, and well skilled in botany.
1. 620. 'To see to,' to behold.
1. 621. 'Virtuous,' possessing medicinal properties.
1. 626. 'Scrip,' small bag.
1. 627. 'Simples,' herbs. Another form of samples.
1. 628. 'Faculties,' properties.
1. 634. 'Like,' so; i.e. being unknown, it was despised.
1. 635. 'Clouted,' patched. 'Shoon,' shoes; an example of the -en ending preserved in oxen.
1. 636. 'Moly,' 'a fabulous herb of magic power, having a black root and white blossom'.
1. 637. 'Ulysses having received from Hermes (Mercury)

the root moly, which fortified him against enchantment, drank the magic cup [of Circe] without injury, and then compelled Circe to restore his companions to their former shape.'

- l. 638. 'Hæmony.' Probably coined from Hæmonia, Thessaly, a famous land for magic.
- l. 642. 'Little reckoning made,' thought little of it.
- l. 646. 'Lime-twigs.' A reference to a common way of catching birds.
- ll. 650, 651. Ulysses rushes on Circe with drawn sword; Guyon breaks the cup of Acrasia (*F. Q. ii. xii. 57*).
- l. 655. 'Vulcan,' the Roman god of fire. In the *Æneid*, when Cacus, son of Vulcan, is caught in his lair,

'He, powerless to elude or flee,
Black smoke disgorges, dire to see,
With darkness floods the room'.

—Conington's Translation, p. 264.

- l. 657. 'Apace,' on-pace, swiftly.
- l. 661. 'Daphne' 'was pursued by Apollo, who was charmed by her beauty; but as she was on the point of being overtaken by him, she prayed for aid, and was metamorphosed into a laurel-tree (δάφνη), which became in consequence the favourite tree of Apollo'.—Smith.
- l. 662. 'Root-bound,' held fast by roots.
- l. 664. 'Corporal rind,' rind formed by the body.
- l. 667. Perfect inversion would make a fine expression here: 'From these gates far flies sorrow'.
- l. 669. 'That fancy can conceive under the stimulus of youthful thoughts.'
- l. 672. 'Julep,' a drink. Pers. julāb, julep, a sweet drink; fr. gulāb, rose-water, julep. 'Cordial,' exhilarating.
- l. 673. 'His,' for its.
- l. 674. Syrup, sirup, is Arabic shariba, he drank.
- l. 675. 'Nepenthes' (thought to be opium) was a 'care-dispelling' drug given to Helen, daughter of Jupiter, by Polydamna, wife of Thone, and in-

fused by Helen into the wine of her husband, Menelaus.

- ll. 682-684. I.e. 'you refuse pleasure, and thus abuse the gifts of nature'.
- l. 685. 'Unexempt condition,' condensed; 'condition from which no one is exempt'.
- l. 687. 'Refreshment,' 'ease'. In apposition with condition.
- l. 688. 'That.' The antecedent is 'you,' in line 682.
- l. 694. See line 320. 'Aspects'. Note the accent.
- l. 698. 'Vizored,' masked, concealed.
- l. 700. 'Lickerish,' dainty. F. lécher. O. H. G. lechón, to lick.
- l. 701. 'Juno,' queen of heaven.
- l. 703. Cp. line 618 of Euripides' *Medea*:—κακοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς δῶρ' ὀνησιν οὐκ ἔχει—The gifts of a bad man profit not. Note also ll. 390, 391 of *Paradise Regained*, book ii.—
 'Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
 And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles'.
- l. 707. 'Budge,' a kind of fur. The word, however, occurs with the sense of 'big'. Cp. F. bouge, great pouch. It may also derivatively mean 'surly'. Stoics and Cynics especially despised the pleasures of the senses.*
- l. 708. 'Tub' of Diogenes, the Cynic.
- l. 714. 'Curious,' eager to try them all.
- l. 719. 'Hutched,' stored. Hutch means a box; Low L. hutica, hutch, box.
- l. 720. 'Store,' supply.
- l. 721. 'Pulse,' seed of beans, pease, &c. L. puls, with pl. pultes = poultice.
- l. 722. 'Frieze,' a coarse woollen cloth.
- l. 726. 'Niggard,' miser. A Scandinavian word with

* 'Fur,' order, the profession being named by the dress. Cp. 'gentlemen of the long robe'. 'It is the first time Cynic or Stoic ever put on fur.'—Landor.

English suffix, -ard. Cp. M. E. nigon, a niggard, and niggish, stingy.

1. 728. 'Who.' The antecedent is shut up in the possessive Nature's.
1. 729. 'Strangled,' suffocated. The Shakespearian use of the word.
1. 731. 'Over-multitude,' multiply in excess of.
1. 734. 'Below,' and therefore in gloom.
1. 737. 'Coy,' reserved. L. quietus, still. 'Cozened,' cheated. 'To cozen is to act as *cousin* or kinsman, to sponge upon, beguile.'—Skeat.
1. 742. 'Unsavoury,' &c. An absolute construction; 'Beauty being unsavoury,' &c.
1. 744. 'It,' namely, beauty.
1. 750. 'Sorry grain,' inferior colour. Grain is L. granum, a grain, corn. But there is engrain, to dye of a fast colour. Note also O. F. graine, 'the seed of herbs, also grain, wherewith cloth is died *in grain*, scarlet die, scarlet in graine.'—Cotgrave. The 'colour' signification is due to the fact that the Latin granum was applied to coccum, dried seed like bodies of insects producing a red colour. 'Ply,' work at.
1. 752. 'Vermeil,' vermilion. F. vermeil.
1. 753. 'Tresses like the morn,' fair-tressed.
- ll. 756-761. Spoken aside.
1. 756. 'To have unlocked.' For 'to unlock'.
1. 757. 'But that.' Elliptical; 'but I see that'.
1. 759. 'Pranked,' adorned.
1. 760. 'Bolt her arguments,' set them forth with careful discrimination. To bolt is to sift meal, to separate meal and bran; hence to discuss thoroughly.
1. 778. 'Unsuperfluous,' none having too much.
1. 774. Cp. ll. 729-786.
1. 782. 'Sun-clad,' glorious as the sun.
1. 793. 'Uncontrolled worth,' worth left free to act.
1. 797. 'Brute Earth.' A Horatian phrase.
- ll. 800-806. Spoken aside.

1. 800. 'She fables not,' she does not speak falsely.
1. 801. 'Set off,' made more effective.
1. 804. Zeus (Jove), having attacked and dethroned his father Cronus (Saturn), had next to subdue the Titans, his father's adherents. After long conflict Zeus, by means of his dreadful thunderbolts, prevailed and cast his foes into Tartarus; which place Milton seems to identify with another land of gloom—Erebus.
1. 808. 'Foundation,' society.
1. 809. 'Lees and settlings,' the grosser, heavier portion.
1. 815. See line 653.
11. 816, 817. The orthodox way of undoing the effects of magic.
1. 822. Melibœus is one of the shepherds in Virgil's first Eclogue.
1. 823. 'Soothest,' truest.
1. 826. The story of 'Sabrina' is told by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *British History*, and by subsequent writers, Spenser, Drayton, &c.; the veracious Geoffrey may therefore be the 'Melibœus old'. According to legend, Brutus, great-grandson of Aeneas of Troy, was king of Britain. At his death the kingdom was divided, England falling to Loocrine. Sabrina was the daughter of Loocrine and Estrildis. All three came under the vengeance of Guendolen, wife of Loocrine, whom Loocrine divorced to marry Estrildis. Raising an army in Cornwall, her native land, Guendolen made war on Loocrine, who was slain. Estrildis and Sabrina she ordered to be cast into the Severn, and ordained that the river should bear the daughter's name, hoping by this to perpetuate her memory, and by that the infamy of her husband. So that to this day the river is called in the British tongue, Sabren, which, by the corruption of the name, is in another language Sabrina. Milton softens the story considerably.

1. 827. 'Whilom,' formerly. A. S. *hwilum*, dative plural of *hwil*, a time.
1. 835. Milton brings in a divinity of the classical mythology. 'Nereus' 'appears as a kindly, benevolent old man, the good spirit of the Ægean Sea, where he dwells with his fifty lovely daughters, the Nereids'.—Seemann.
1. 836. 'Lank,' languid. A. S. *hlanc*, slender. 'The original sense was probably "bending"'.—Skeat.
1. 838. 'Nectared lavers,' baths into the water in which nectar had been dropped. On the surface of the water floated flowers of *asphodel*, a plant of the lily kind, growing in *Elysium*, whither, according to Homer, favoured heroes passed without dying. *Daffodil* is a corruption of *asphodel*.
1. 841. 'Immortal change,' change that made her immortal.
1. 845. 'Blasts,' strokes. Professor Masson explains 'urchin' as 'hedgehog,' and quotes Warton: 'The urchin, or hedgehog, from its solitariness, the ugliness of its appearance, and from a popular opinion that it sucked or poisoned the udders of cows, was adopted into the demonologic system; and its shape was sometimes supposed to be assumed by mischievous elves'. The word then came to mean 'goblin, imp, small child'.
1. 846. 'Shrewd,' malicious. 'Meddling elf,' some one of the many imps that the rustic imagination peopled the countryside with.
1. 852. 'Neither Geoffrey of Monmouth nor Spenser has this development of the legend'.—Masson.
1. 858. 'Adjuring verse.' See ll. 867-884.
1. 863. 'Amber-dropping hair'; the drops of water falling through amber-coloured hair would look like drops of amber. Cp. 'rosy head,' in line 885.
- ll. 868-882. 'Oceanus,' the god of the great river that in the oldest mythology was supposed to encircle the flat earth; his wife was 'Tethys'. Both were

Titans. 'Neptune' is the sea-god of the later dynasty; he was brother of Jupiter, who de-throned their father, Saturn. Ancient statues of Neptune usually represent him with a trident, 'the earth-shaking mace,' in his right hand. For 'Nereus,' see note on l. 835. Proteus is 'the Carpathian wizard'. He was an inferior deity, servant to Neptune, whose flocks of seals he tended; hence the 'hook' or shepherd's crook. He had the gift of prophecy, but being able to appear in any form he chose, he could be prevailed on to appear as the prophet sea-god only by great persistence. He had a cave at Carpathus, between Crete and Rhodes. 'Triton' was the only son of Neptune and Amphitrite, one of the Nereids. The poets invented a whole race of Tritons, who appear in art as beings with the human figure in the upper part of their bodies and that of a dolphin in the lower (hence the epithet 'scaly'). The 'winding shell,' or trumpet made from a shell, is also a characteristic. 'Glaucus' was a fisherman of Anthedon in Boeotia, who obtained a place among the sea-gods; he had the gift of prophecy. Ino was the wife of King Athamas, and fled from him (after he had in a fit of madness slain his eldest son), with their second son, Melicertes, in her arms. Seeing no hope of escape, Ino sprang with her son into the sea. She and her son were received by the Nereids and made sea-deities, Ino taking the name 'Leucothea,' and Melicertes 'Palæmon'. He is the Latin Portumnus, the guardian of harbours. 'Thetis' was a Nereid, sea-nymph. For 'Sirens,' see note on l. 253. 'Parthenope' and 'Ligea' were Sirens. The 'dear tomb' was at Naples. So 'dear' was the dead Parthenope that Naples was sometimes called by her name.

1. 877. Note the picturesque epithet 'tinsel-slippered'.
It brings up the flash of the waters.
1. 880. The 'golden comb' seems to be borrowed from the stories about Mermaids.
1. 898. 'Azurn.' The 'n' may be due to Ital. *azzurino*, or may be the adjective ending '-en'. Cp. cedarn (Ital. *cedrino*), in line 990.
1. 896. She comes ashore.
1. 897. 'Printless,' leaving no mark.
1. 921. 'Amphitrite,' wife of Neptune.
1. 928. 'Anchises' was father of Æneas. See note on l. 826.
1. 929. 'Tresses fair,' i.e. 'the foliage along the banks of the Severn'.—Masson.
1. 934. 'Head,' not necessarily 'source'; the phrase, 'to crown the head,' is used of the adornment of the whole river.
1. 936. Read 'May thy banks be crowned upon'.
1. 949. 'Gratulate,' express joy at.
1. 951. 'There,' in the neighbourhood.
1. 958. The Spirit breaks in upon the swains at 'their jig and rural dance'. 'Enough your play,' you have had enough of your play.
1. 960. 'Duck or nod.' Typical of awkward dancing.
1. 968. 'Mercury.' Later art represents Mercury as the ideal of grace and vigour; he is a very suitable person, therefore, to devise light, courtly dancing.
1. 964. 'Mincing,' affecting delicacy in manner. A. S. min, small. The Dryads were wood-nymphs.
1. 972. 'Assays,' trials. O. F. *essai*, a trial; L. *exagium*, a trial of weight; Gk. *ἐξάγιον*, a weighing; Gk. *ἐξ*, out, and *ἄγειν*, to lead.
1. 982. See note on l. 898. The parentage of the Hesperides is differently told by different writers.
1. 988. Usually only the apples are golden, but Ovid makes the tree gold.
1. 984. 'Crisped,' curled (by the wind).
1. 986. 'Graces,' the three goddesses that made all life

more charming and graceful. The 'Hours' were three goddesses presiding over the changes of the seasons, and keeping watch at the gates of heaven.

1. 989. 'Musky,' redolent of musk.
1. 990. 'Cedarn.' See note on l. 893.
1. 991. 'Nard,' spikenard, an aromatic plant. 'Cassia,' a species of laurel, yielding a sweet spice.
1. 992. 'Iris,' the personification of the rainbow.
1. 993. 'Blow,' make to blow.
1. 995. 'Purpled scarf,' rainbow. Purpled, embroidered. F. pourfiler.
1. 997. 'Be true.' Can be trusted to appreciate what is to come.
1. 999. 'Adonis' was a beautiful youth, beloved by Venus. In hunting he was slain by a boar.
1. 1002. Under the name Astarte (Ashtoreth), Venus was worshipped by the Assyrians.
1. 1003. 'Spangled sheen,' glittering splendour.
1. 1004. 'Advanced.' Is in apposition with Psyche.
1. 1005. 'Psyche' was so beautiful as to win the love of Cupid, god of love. By her mistrust she offended Cupid, who fled from her. Wholly wretched, Psyche wandered about searching for Cupid, and it was only after much suffering that, at length 'advanced' to a place among the immortals, she was united to Cupid for ever. The myth of course represents the preparation of the soul by suffering to enter into pure happiness. This also is part of the teaching of 'Comus,' see lines 970-975. In these myths, mortals, if their ears be true, hear the praise of pure love, and are asked to compare it with the coarse teaching of 'Comus'. With such pure love, and not with the gross passion eulogised by Comus, Youth and Joy have to do.
1. 1015. 'Welkin,' sky. A. S. wolcnu, clouds.
1. 1017. 'Corners,' horns. L. cornu, horn.

11. 1018-1023. The moral of the poem.

1. 1021. 'Sphery chime,' music of the spheres. The Pythagorean notion, thus expressed by Shakespeare:

'There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st,
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins'.

Merchant of Venice, v. 1.

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